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MR. POPE

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

BY

GEORGE PASTON

Not Fortune's worshipper nor Fashion's fool,
Not Lucre's madman nor Ambition's tool,
Not proud nor servile, be one poet's praise,
That if he pleased, he pleased by manly ways:
That flattery, ev'n to kings, he held a shame,
And thought a lie in verse or prose the same;
That not in Fancy's maze he wandered long,
But stooped to Truth, and moralised his song.

Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.

WITH TWENTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS, INCLUDING
TWO PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECES

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MR. POPE

CHAPTER XXXV

1728

The Effect of "The Dunciad"—Visit to Bath—The Dean and Martha Blount

"THE Dunciad" fell like a bomb-shell among the denizens of Grub Street: or perhaps it might more accurately be described as a boomerang. The Dunces were not disposed to take their punishment lying down, and when it came to mud-slinging, pure and simple, there were some who were a match for Pope, though their mud was of a less sticking quality than his. The amount of damage, moral and material, wrought by "The Dunciad" seems, however, to have been exaggerated. The story of the authors' besieging the booksellers' shops is probably fictitious, and it is doubtful whether any of the victims were a penny the worse for the satire, which has rendered their names immortal. The statement that they were unable thenceforth to obtain employment from the booksellers, and therefore were in danger of starving, is certainly inaccurate. The Grub Street hacks con-

tinued to live and write in exactly the same fashion as before. An attempt has recently been made to rehabilitate the Dunces, and prove that the majority of them were men of marked ability; but this is going rather too far. It is impossible to wade through the counterblasts to "The Dunciad" without being convinced that Pope had not maligned his victims. In the whole of anti-Dunciad literature there is not one production which rises above dull and peevish mediocrity. Theobald refused to retaliate except by working all the more conscientiously at the edition of Shakespeare, which was presently to supersede the work of his rival.

Curll, Welsted, Moore-Smythe, and Dennis were the leading champions of the Grub Street cause. Among the retaliatory pamphlets put forth by the Dunces were "The Key to 'The Dunciad,'" by Curll, "The Female Dunciad," an "Essay on Criticism," by Oldmixon, "Sawney," by Ralph, "The Metamorphosis of Scriblerus into Snarlerus," by Dean Smedley,[1] "Durgen," by Ned Ward, an "Essay on the Taste and Writings of the Confederates," the belated "Remarks on 'The Rape of the Lock,'" by Dennis, and "A Pop upon Pope." The last-named was attributed by the poet to his quondam friend, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. The rupture between the pair must have occurred at least a year before, for there is an insulting allusion to the lady in "The Capon's Tale" which appeared

[1] Jonathan Smedley, Dean of Clogher, who wrote in the Whig interest. After the appearance of the volume of "Miscellanies" containing "The Bathos," he wrote a satire against Pope and Swift called "Gulliveriana and Alexandriana."

in the "Miscellanies." In "The Dunciad" there is a couplet which is generally believed to apply to Lady Mary Wortley:

> Whence hapless Monsieur much complains at Paris
> Of wrongs from duchesses and Lady Marys.

This was obviously an allusion to Rémond and his losses, through the agency of Lady Mary, in the South Sea Bubble. In the complete edition of "The Dunciad" the satire is accentuated by the insulting note.[1] The author of the "Pop upon Pope" professes to give a "True and Faithful Account of a late horrid and barbarous Whipping committed on the body of Sawney Pope, a poet, as he was innocently walking in Ham Walk, near the river Thames, meditating verses for the good of the public. Supposed to have been done by two evil-disposed persons, out of spite and revenge for a harmless lampoon which the said poet had writ upon them." The statement was contradicted in another advertisement, but some of the poet's friends took the matter seriously, knowing that threats of personal chastisement had been uttered against him.

On June 13 Dr. Stratford wrote to Lord Oxford: "I have read Mr. Pope's 'Dunciad' with a great deal of pleasure. I am sure it must be his, because no one else could write it. . . .

[1] The note is as follows: "This passage was thought to allude to a famous lady who cheated a French wit of £5,000 in the South Sea year. But the author meant it generally of all bragging travellers, and of all whores and cheats under the name of ladies." There is no good reason for thinking that Lady Mary wrote "A Pop upon Pope."

I should be glad to know whether he has been insulted lately, as a late advertisement seemed to insinuate. If it was so, it was very barbarous to attack so weak and little a man in a manner in which he was so unequal a match for them."

In "The Key to the Dunciad," rushed out by Curll, the full names of the persons satirised are for the most part correctly given. There is an allusion to Pope's complaint (in his Publisher's Preface) that of the hundred thousand readers who had enjoyed his poetry, not one had stood up in his defence. "What man that lays the best claim either to honour or conscience," asks Curll, "can stand up in the defence of a scoundrel and a blockhead, who has, at one time or another, betrayed or abused almost every one he has conversed with? Yet now he kicks and winces because his arrogance and insolence have been exposed by Theobald."

The most damaging accusation brought against Pope was to the effect that he, basking in comfortable prosperity, had sneered at poverty, and ridiculed the hardships suffered by men of letters in nearly every age. Thus Smedley, in "The New Metamorphosis," asks:

> Could not the great wit, the prime bard of the nation,
> Be content to enjoy such a vast reputation;
> The favour of nobles, with vulgar applauses,
> A thousand caresses for different causes?
> Sure he might have rested, and let down his anchor,
> And smiled when the bard was as rich as a banker.
>
> . . . . .
>
> But further, it raises resentment and wonder
> To find in "The Dunciad" so cruel a blunder:

Where the author on poverty throws his reflection,
And thinks that alone a sufficient objection.
Have not many great men, in all arts and all ages,
Complained that Dame Fortune had stinted their wages?

But it was reserved to Edward Ward to wound the poet in his tenderest part. In a versified satire called "Durgen," Ward reproves Pope for attacking women as well as men:

Nor can some loose flagitious Wits forbear
T' unman their wit in torturing the fair.
Exposing to our weak, unguarded youth
Too little of their worth, or too much truth.
Both tending to subvert that happy state
Which to each man confirms a pleasing mate;
Forgetting that perhaps he makes a jest
Of his own mother's failings with the rest.
And thus, by early prejudice o'ercome,
Directs by chance the unlucky satire home.

Pope seems to have attributed this cruel stab to Moore-Smythe, whom he pursued thereafter with unrelenting malignity. But Moore-Smythe and Welsted were sharpening their weapons for a blow which was to fall two years later. In consequence of the hubbub raised by the first appearance of "The Dunciad," five editions of the poem at least were sold in the course of the year, and Pope worked up the "boom" by means of such little mystifications as occurred to his ingenious mind. The author's friends were anxious that he should put forth a complete version of his poem, in which the blanks and initials should be filled up with names of his victims. Lord Oxford wrote, as early as May 27, to say that he was longing

for an authoritative key to "The Dunciad," and Pope replied:

"I am so busy about a thing to gratify you with, which I assure you is a more pleasing end than any other I propose, though I have received a command for the same thing from the highest and most powerful person in the kingdom, that I can but just tell you I thank you for yours, and Dr. Stratford for his kind concern about my person, which has hitherto remained as unhurt, I thank God, as my temper by those scoundrels."

Swift was even more eager for the new edition that should dot the i's and cross the t's of satire. Pope sent him the good news on June 28 that "The Dunciad" was going to be printed in all pomp, with the inscription to Swift. "It will be attended with *Proeme*, *Prolegomena*, *Testimonia Scriptorum*, *Index Authorum*, and Notes *Variorum*. As to the latter, I desire you to read over the text, and make a few in the way you like best, whether dry raillery upon the style and way of commenting of trivial critics; or humorous, upon the authors in the poem; or historical, on persons, places and times; or explanatory; or collecting the parallel passages from the ancients."

But the work lingered, and the dean grew impatient. He writes to urge that the notes should be very full, in so far as they related to persons and places, "for I have long observed that, twenty miles from London nobody understands hints, initial letters, or town facts and passages; and, in a few years, not even those who live in London. I would have the names of those scribblers printed indexically

at the beginning or end of the poem, with an account of their works for the reader to refer to. I would have all the parodies, as they are called, referred to the author they imitate. . . . After twenty times reading the whole, I never in my life saw so much good satire or more good sense in so many lines." Swift had evidently changed his opinion since he advised Pope to leave the obscure writers alone, and not confer immortality on a set of grubs.

In spite of the sensational success of "The Dunciad," Pope was more than usually out of spirits and out of health in the summer of 1728. He complains to Swift that his various ties are dropping from him: some worn off, some torn off, and others relaxed daily. "My greatest, both to duty, gratitude, humanity, time is shaking every moment, and it now hangs but by a thread. I am many years the older for being so much with one so old; much the more helpless for having been so long helped and tended by her; much the more considerate and tender for a daily commerce with one who required me justly to be both to her; and, consequently, the more melancholy and thoughtful, and the less fit for others, who want only, in a companion or a friend, to be amused or entertained. My constitution, too, has had its share of decay, as well as my spirits, and I am as much in the decline at forty as you at sixty. . . ."

The dean, from his eleven years' seniority, declared that for Pope to talk of decay at his time of life was absurd, and adds: "You are the most temperate man Godward, and the most intemperate yourself-ward of most I have known." Swift did

not believe that Pope's discomfort was due to his living with his old mother. He thought it was the result of over-indulgence in the society of persons of superior rank.

"I reckon," he remarks, "that a man subject, like us, to bodily infirmities, should only occasionally converse with great people, notwithstanding all their good qualities, easiness, and kindnesses. There is another race which I prefer before them, as beef and mutton for constant diet before partridges: I mean a middle kind both for understanding and fortune, who are perfectly easy, never impertinent, complying in everything, ready to do a hundred little offices that you and I may often want, who dine and sit with me five times for once that I go to them, and whom I can tell, without offence, that I am otherwise engaged at present."

Pope spent a good deal of time this summer at Dawley with Lord Bolingbroke, who, being foiled in his political ambitions, was playing at being a good honest farmer. Writing to Swift on June 28, Pope says that he is holding the pen for my Lord Bolingbroke, who is reading the dean's letter between two haycocks, though his attention is sometimes diverted by his casting his eyes on the clouds, not in admiration of his friend's eloquence, but for fear of a shower. "Now his lordship is run after his cart, I have a moment left to myself to tell you that I overheard him yesterday agree with a painter, for £200, to paint his country hall with trophies of rakes, spades, prongs, and other ornaments, merely to countenance his calling this place a farm."

Early in September Pope was obliged to undergo a six weeks' cure at Bath, in the hope of patching up his broken constitution. Gay had preceded him thither, and, in the society of wits and duchesses, was rapidly dissipating a part of the little fortune brought him by *The Beggar's Opera*.[1] Swift, who could never convince Gay that "a shilling was a serious thing," prophesied that "Johnny" would return from the Baths with twenty pounds more in flesh, but two hundred less in money. "Providence," he exclaims, "never designed him to be above two-and-twenty by his thoughtlessness and gullibility. He has as little foresight of age, sickness, poverty, or loss of admirers as a girl of fifteen."

Pope left home most reluctantly, for his mother was in so precarious a state of health that he feared her death might take place during his absence. He also keenly felt the parting from Martha Blount, upon whom he depended more every year for sympathy and companionship. In an undated letter from Cirencester, the poet expresses his distaste for this journey in search of health. Never since he had first known Patty had he been separated from her for so long a period. "Methinks we live to be more and more strangers," he complains, "and every year teaches you to live without me. This absence may, I fear, make my return less welcome and less wanted to you than once it seemed, even after but a fortnight."

Lord Bathurst, he declares, is too much for him,

[1] Gay had gone to Bath in May with the young Duchess of Marlborough and Congreve.

for that elderly gentleman was in high spirits all day long, and never tired. Uneasiness of body, however, he can bear without complaint, while his chief uneasiness of mind is on Martha's account. Then follows one of those characteristic "preachments" to which Miss Blount must have been pretty well inured by this time.

"You have a temper that would make you *easy* and *beloved* (which is all the happiness one needs to wish in this world), and content with moderate things. All your point is not to lose that temper by sacrificing yourself to others, out of a mistaken tenderness which hurts you, and profits not them. And this you must do soon, or it will be too late. Habit will make it as hard for you to live independent as for Lyttelton to live out of a Court.

"You must excuse me for observing what I think any defect in you: you grow too indolent, and give up things too easily; which would be otherwise when you found and felt yourself your own: spirits would come in as ill-usage went out. While you live under a kind of perpetual oppression and dejection, nothing at all belongs to you, not your own *honour* nor your own *sense*.

"You cannot conceive how much you would find resolution rise and cheerfulness grow upon you, if you would once try to live independent for two or three months. I never think tenderly of you but this comes across me, and therefore excuse my repeating it, for whenever I do not I dissemble half that I think of you."

This is an important letter, since it throws a flash-light upon the degree of intimacy that existed

between Miss Blount and the poet at this time. It shows, too, that Pope, whether consciously or unconsciously, was urging Martha to take a step that must have been detrimental to her own best interests. If she had left her mother's roof and broken with her family, after the scandals that had attacked her name, she would have been committing social suicide.

Earlier in the year Swift had written, at Pope's request, a long letter to Patty, which contains a good deal of chaff and many allusions to intimate jokes, with a covert hint that the lady might mend her ways and assert her independence.

"I am told," he says, "you grow every day younger, and more of a fool, which is directly contrary to me, who grow wiser and older, and at this rate we shall never agree. I long to see you a London lady, where you are forced to wear whole clothes, and visit in a chair, for which you must starve next summer at Petersham with a mantua out at the sides ;[1] and spunge once a week at our house without ever inviting us in a whole season to a cow-heel at home. I wish you would bring Mr. Pope over with you when you come, but we will leave Mr. Gay to his Beggars and his operas till he is able to pay his club. How will you pass this summer for want of a squire to Ham Common and Walpole's Lodge? for as to Richmond Lodge and Marble Hill, they are abandoned as much as Sir Spencer Compton. . . .

[1] Lady Worsley, in a letter to Swift, alluded to Miss Blount as "dirty Patty." Swift protested against the description, declaring that Patty, very sensibly, wore old gowns for country walks, and saved her money to make more show in London.

"Your greatest happiness is that you are out of the chiding of Mrs. Howard and the dean; but I suppose Mr. Pope is so just as to pay our arrears, and that you edify as much by him as by us, unless you are so happy that he now looks upon you as reprobate and a castaway, of which I think he has given me some hints. However, I would advise you to pass this summer at Kensington, where you will be near the Court, and out of his jurisdiction, where you will be teased with no lectures of gravity and morality, and where you will have no other trouble than to get into the mercer's books, and take up a hundred pounds of your capital for quadrille. Monstrous, indeed, that a fine lady, in the prime of life and gaiety, must take up with an antiquated dean, an old gentlewoman of four-score, and a sickly poet. I will stand by my dear Patty against the world if Teresa beats you for your good, and I will bring her a fine new whip for the purpose. . . . My greatest concern in the matter is, that I am afraid I continue in love with you, which is hard after near six months' absence. I hope you have done with your rash and other little disorders, and that I shall see you a fine, young, healthy, plump lady; and if Mr. Pope chides you, threaten him that you will turn heretic. . . . Since I can never live in England, my greatest happiness would be to have you and Mr. Pope condemned, during my life, to live in Ireland—he at the deanery, and you, for reputation's sake, just at next door, and I will give you eight dinners a week, and a whole half-dozen of pint bottles of good French wine at your lodgings—a thing you could

never expect to arrive at—and every year a suit of fourteen-penny stuff, that should not be worn out at the right side; and a chair costs but sixpence a job; and you shall have as much Catholicity as you please, and the Catholic Dean of St. Patrick's, as old again as I, for your confessor."

Patty's sensible and humorous reply to the above has been preserved. She was not apparently a very ready writer, but in her laconic style she could express her meaning, and answer a bit of chaff as neatly as any of her witty friends. She has been indisposed, she explains, and confined to the house for a week.

"This confinement, together with my mourning, has enabled me to be very easy in my chair-hire: for a dyed black gown and a scoured white one have done my business very well; and they are now just fit for Petersham, where we talk of going in three weeks; and I am not without hopes I shall have the same squire I had last year. I am very unwilling to change: and moreover, I begin to fear I have no great prospect of getting any new danglers; and therefore, in order to make a tolerable figure, I shall endeavour to behave myself well, that I may keep my old ones. . . . Dr. Arbuthnot I am very angry with; he neglects me for those he thinks finer ladies. Mr. Gay's fame continues, but his riches are in a fair way of diminishing. He is gone to the Bath. I wish you were ordered there; for I believe that would carry Mr. Pope, who is always inclined to do more for his friends than himself."

CHAPTER XXXVI

1728–9

The Prohibition of "Polly"—The Complete Edition of "The Dunciad"—Retaliation

THE visit to the Bath, which was then regarded as a panacea for nearly all physical ills, brought no return of health to the poet. "I do not think," he wrote to Lord Bathurst in November, "I shall ever enjoy any health for four days together for the remaining sands I have to run. The Bath was tried, after all other remedies, as a last resource, and that has proved wholly ineffectual."

In December 1728, Gay had finished *Polly*, the sequel to *The Beggar's Opera*, and he looked forward to having it brought upon the stage without delay. But, to his consternation and amazement, the performance of the opera was prohibited, owing to the attacks it contained upon the Court and the Government. Although the subscription for the printed version was very large, and although he received the protection and support of the Duchess of Queensberry,[1] Gay took his disappointment bitterly to

[1] The duchess was forbidden the Court for soliciting subscriptions to *Polly* at the Drawing-room. Mrs. Pendarves says, "One might have imagined her beauty would have secured her from such

heart. A combination of chagrin and gluttony was too much for his constitution, and the news presently came to Pope's ears that his little friend was lying desperately ill in lodgings at Hampstead. The poet, whom a fellow-feeling rendered wondrous kind in a case of illness, wrote to assure Gay that if he himself were not in daily apprehension of losing his mother, he would take rooms at Hampstead, and share in the work of nursing.

"If I am so unfortunate as to lose my poor mother," he continues, "and yet have the good fortune to have my prayers heard for you, I hope we may live most of our remaining days together. If, as I believe, the air of a better clime, as the southern part of France, may be thought useful for your recovery, thither I would go with you infallibly; and it is very probable we might get the dean with us, who is in that abandoned state already in which I shall shortly be, as to other cares and duties.

treatment." When the Vice-Chamberlain went with the message, the duchess returned the following answer:

"The duchess of Queensberry is surprised and well-pleased that the king has given her so agreeable a command as to stay from Court, where she never came for diversion, but to bestow a civility upon the king and queen; she hopes by so unprecedented an order as this that the king will see so few as he wishes at his Court, particularly such as dare to think or speak the truth. I dare not do otherwise, and would not have imagined that it would not have been the very highest compliment I could possibly pay the king to endeavour to support mirth and innocence in his house, particularly when the king and queen both told me they had not read Mr. Gay's play. I have certainly done right, then, to stand by my own words rather than his Grace of Grafton's [Lord Chamberlain], who had neither made use of *truth*, *judgment*, nor *honour*, through this whole affair, either for himself or his friends.

"C. QUEENSBERRY."

Dear Gay, be as cheerful as your sufferings will permit; God is a better friend than a Court; even any honest man is a better."

Thanks to the devoted attention of Arbuthnot, Gay pulled through, and Mrs. Pope still lingered on, though for some time her death was daily expected. Congreve, a friend of long standing, was taken ill about this time, and died on January 19, 1729. It was a depressing period for our poet, who wrote to Gay later in the same month that he had spent five weeks without going from home, and without any company, except on four or five days. "Friends rarely stretch their kindness so far as ten miles. My Lord Bolingbroke and Mr. Bethel have not forgotten to visit me; the rest, except Mrs. Blount once, were contented to send messages. I never passed so melancholy a time, and now Mr. Congreve's death touches me nearly."

Though Gay recovered his health, it was some time before he recovered his spirits. His melancholy, he declares, daily increases, "and not the divine looks, the kind favours and expressions of the divine duchess, who hereafter shall be in place of a queen to me—nay, she shall be my queen—nor the inexpressible goodness of the duke, can in the least cheer me. The drawing-room no more receives light from those two stars. . . . Oh, that I had never known what a Court was! Dear Pope, what a barren soil (to me so) I have been striving to produce something out of! Why did I not take your advice before writing my 'Fables' for the duke, not to write them? Or, rather, to write them for some young nobleman? It is very hard fate that I

must get nothing, write for or against them." Gay concludes by begging Pope to see that the now famous epitaph was put over his tomb :

> Life is a jest, and all things show it,
> I thought so once, but now I know it.

But it was not long before the little man plucked up his spirit. Indeed, he could hardly fail to be gratified at the fact that, since his disgrace with the Court and Ministry he had become the darling of one section of society.[1] "For writing in the cause of virtue and against the fashionable vices," he tells Swift (on March 19), "I am looked upon at present as the most obnoxious person almost in England. Mr. Pulteney tells me I have got the start of him. Mr. Pope tells me that I am dead, and that this obnoxiousness is the reward for my inoffensiveness in my former life. The Duchess of Queensberry is allowed to have shown more spirit, more honour, more goodness than was thought possible in our times ; I should have added, too, more understanding and good sense. You see my fortune (as I hope my virtue will) increases by oppression. I go to no Courts ; I drink no wine ; and am calumniated even by Ministers of State ; and yet am in good spirits."

[1] Arbuthnot, writing to Swift on March 19, says that "The inoffensive John Gay is now become one of the obstructions to the peace of Europe, the terror of ministers, the chief author of *The Craftsman*, and all the seditious pamphlets which have been published against the Government. He has got several turned out of their places ; the greatest ornament of the Court banished from it for his sake ; another great lady is in danger of being *chassée* likewise ; about seven or eight duchesses pushing like the ancient circumcelliones in the church, who shall suffer martyrdom upon his account first. He is the darling of the city."

Extraordinary as had been the success of the first incomplete version of "The Dunciad," Pope dared not issue the enlarged edition with personal notes without taking elaborate precautions to secure himself against actions for libel. In November he assigned to "three lords of his acquaintance"—Burlington, Oxford, and Bathurst—the temporary ownership of the poem, while they, in their turn, assigned the right of printing the same to Pope's chosen publisher, Lawton Gilliver. Although the book was registered at Stationers' Hall in November 1728, it was not published until April 1729. On March 13 Pope had written to Lord Oxford: "You are now at full liberty to publish all my faults and enormities. The king and queen had the book yesterday by the hands of Sir R. W[alpole], so that your lordships may now let me fly."[1]

For a time the fiction was carefully kept up that only the three peers had the right to distribute the books. On April 8 Pope wrote to inform Caryll that the new edition was written, all but the poem, by two or three of his friends, who had the art to make trifles agreeable. "It would have been a sort of curiosity had it reached your hands a week ago, for the publishers had not then permitted any to be sold, but only dispersed by some lords of their and my acquaintance, of whom I procured yours. But I understand that now the booksellers have got them by the consent of Lord Bathurst."

[1] The king is reported to have said, after reading "The Dunciad," or having it read to him, that "Mr. Pope was a very honest man."

The new and enlarged edition opened with a letter to the publisher, signed by William Cleland,[1] but undoubtedly dictated by Pope. Cleland begins by expressing his pleasure that the publisher has been able to secure a correct version of "The Dunciad," and states that he has forwarded some notes, which he hopes will be inserted. He explains that it was upon reading some of the abusive papers published concerning his friend, the author, that he engaged in inquiries of which these notes were the result. In the first place, he perceived that these abusive writers had been the first aggressors. They had striven to prove Mr. Pope a dunce, and, failing in this, had descended to personal abuse of himself and his friends. "Now what had Mr. Pope done before to incense them? He had published those works which are in the hands of everybody, in which not the least mention is made of any of them. And what has he done since? He has laughed, and written 'The Dunciad.'" In that work he had told a serious truth, which the public had said before, namely, that they were dull.

The writer proceeds that he should have been silent if these men had not attacked his friend's moral character, and that anonymously. This was a matter of both public and private concern. He was one of that number who had long loved and esteemed Mr. Pope, not so much for his capacity and writings

[1] Cleland was a Scotsman, who had served with the army in Spain. In 1723 he was appointed a commissioner of the land-tax and house duties. Pope made use of him as he did of Savage. Cleland earned the nickname of Mr. Pope's "Man William."

as for the openness, honesty, and beneficence of his character. He had therefore procured a number of abusive passages from their writings, which he took leave to forward to the publisher.

Turning to the objections that he had heard uttered against "The Dunciad," the only ones worthy of consideration were that the authors attacked were too obscure for satire, and that poverty was not a legitimate subject for satire. With regard to the first, he points out that the obscurity of the rabble did not secure them from punishment in the case of wrong-doing, but that obscurity actually rendered them more dangerous, as less thought of. As for the plea of poverty, that might be put forward at the Old Bailey as an excuse for lesser crimes than defamation. Poverty was here the accident, and not the subject, though even poverty is a just subject for satire when it is the consequence of idleness, vice, or prodigality. Besides, it was not charity to encourage the dunces, because men are not bunglers because they are poor, but poor because they are bunglers.

The letter concludes with a panegyric on Pope, who, it is asserted, "has not been a follower of Fortune or Success; he has lived with the great without flattery; been a friend to men in power without pensions, from whom, as he asked, so he received, no favour, but what was done him in his friends. . . . Though engaged in their friendships, he never espoused their animosities; and can almost singly challenge this honour, not to have written a line of any man which, through guilt, through

shame, or through fear, through variety of fortune or change of interests, he was ever unwilling to own. . . ."

The Letter to the Publisher was followed by the Prolegomena of Martinus Scriblerus, Testimonies of Authors (containing extracts from the praise and blame that had been published against Pope's works), a Dissertation on the Poem, and Dunciados Periocha. Among the Appendices were A List of Books and Papers in which the Author was abused, William Caxton his Proema to Æneidos, Virgil Restored, the article on Pastoral Poetry from *The Guardian*, and a Parallel of the Characters of Mr. Dryden and Mr. Pope. The frontispiece showed an ass laden with books and papers—the works of the poet's enemies. An owl is perched upon the pile of volumes. The notes to this edition are voluminous, and written in a style of pedantic humour which soon becomes wearisome. The greater number were from the pen of Pope, but a few were contributed by Swift and Arbuthnot. Into the text new epigrams were inserted—Ralph, Welsted and Broome coming in for special punishment.[1]

[1] Silence, ye wolves! while Ralph to Cynthia howls,
And makes night hideous—answer him, ye owls!

(Ralph had written a poem called "Night.")

Flow, Welsted, flow! like thine inspirer, beer,
Though stale, not ripe; though thin, yet never clear;
So sweetly mawkish, and so smoothly dull;
Heady, not strong; o'erflowing, though not full.

(These couplets are a parody of some lines in Denham's "Cooper's Hill.")

Hibernian politics, O Swift! thy doom
And Pope's, translating three whole years with Broome.

As was only to be expected, the war of retaliation broke out again. There were numerous threats of actions for libel, and as early as April 18 Pope wrote to Lord Oxford :

"The gentlemen of 'The Dunciad' intend to be vexatious to the bookseller, and threaten to bring an action of I cannot tell how many thousands against him. It is judged by the learned in law that if three or four of those noblemen who honour me with their friendship would avow it so openly as to suffer their names to be set to a certificate of the nature of the enclosed, it would screen the poor man from their insults. If your lordship will let it be transcribed fair, and allow yours to be subscribed with those of Lord Burlington, Lord Bathurst, and one or two more, I need not say it will both oblige and honour me vastly. . . ."

The enclosed paper ran as follows : "Whereas a clamour hath been raised by certain persons, and threats uttered against the publisher or publishers of the poem called 'The Dunciad,' with notes, variorum, etc., we, whose names are underwritten, do declare ourselves to have been the publishers and dispersers thereof, and that the same was delivered out and vended by our immediate discretion." [1]

One of the earliest counterblasts was a pamphlet called "Pope Alexander's Supremacy and Infallibility Examined," which was generally attributed to John Dennis and George Ducket.[2] The frontispiece was

[1] It does not appear that the certificate was ever granted.

[2] Ducket was member for Calne for a time, and Commissioner of Excise 1722-32. He appears as a didapper in "The Bathos,"

an effective design (which was also sold separately for sixpence) entitled "His Holiness and his Prime Minister. The Phiz and Character of an Alexandrine Hyper-critick and Commentator." This shows Pope in the form of an ape, crouching on a pedestal, his head on his hand (a favourite attitude) and his elbow resting on a pile of his own works. An ass stands by his side, from whose ear hangs "A Letter to the Publisher." The design is cleverer than the text, which consists of the usual dreary abuse. "The Dunciad" is alluded to as "this insipid poem, the outcome of this pigmy animal's malice, which, if it should endure to be read by posterity, would endure only as a monument of infamy." Again, the reception of "The Dunciad" by the town proved that "the performance was thought as mean as the design, the lines being prosaic, the transitions unnatural, the whole tale loose and unconnected, and the too frequent parodies on the most admired passages of the ancients poorly worked up."

Pope took the skit seriously, and, forgetting the proverb about glass houses, contemplated taking legal action against the authors. On May 16 he wrote to the long-suffering Lord Oxford :

"I see a book with a curious cut, called 'Pope Alexander's Supremacy,' etc., qto. In it are three or four things so false and scandalous that I think I know the authors, and they are of a rank to merit detection. I therefore beg your lordship to send a

and in "The Dunciad" he was satirised in conjunction with Thomas Burnet. He is supposed to have collaborated with Burnet in "Homerides." Pope evidently thought that the same pair were responsible for "Pope Alexander's Supremacy."

careful hand to beg the book of Lintot—who must not be known to come from you—and to enter down the day of the month. The book is writ by Burnet, and a person who has great obligations to me, and the cut is done by Ducket. I would fain come at the proof of this for reasons of a very high nature. Let the same man, after he has the book, go to Roberts the publisher, in Warwick Lane, and threaten him, unless he declares the author, or any other method your lordship can judge best."

Probably Pope was advised to take no action, for nothing came of the threat. If he had attempted to bring into Court all who had replied to his satire he would certainly have had his hands full. Among the new crop of retaliatory letters and skits were "Remarks upon Several Passages in the Preliminaries to 'The Dunciad'" (in a letter addressed by Dennis to Theobald), a letter from Giles Jacob to Dennis, accusing Pope of having written the flattering notice of himself in The Poetical Register, "The Curliad," and letters in *Mist's Journal* and *The Flying Post*.

Dennis points out, in the course of his "Remarks," that Pope wrote his own panegyrics in his Prefaces, and declares his conviction that there is "no sich person" as William Cleland. He complains that though "The Dunciad" is styled an heroic poem, there is no action in it, and that the hero, in particular, never does anything except sleep. The author of "The Curliad" controverts Pope's statement that men of letters are poor because they are bunglers, and instances the poverty and struggles of Bacon, Milton, Butler, Dryden, and others. He ridicules Pope's habit of calling upon his aristocratic friends to

bear witness to the truth of his assertions, remarking that "the evidence of the most illustrious peer will not go farther in any court of judicature whatever than that of a peasant." Worse still, the writer of a letter to the *The Flying Post* crushingly remarked that Swift, who had done his best "to render religion, reason, and common sense ridiculous, and to set up in their stead buffoonery, grimace, and impertinence," has "picked up in his Travels a decrepid diminutive Lilliputian poet, whom he has placed by his side on the throne of wit—an empire to which they have just as much right as their dear king at Bologna to His Majesty's."

CHAPTER XXXVII

1729

Charges against Teresa Blount—Manœuvres preparatory to the Publication of the Wycherley "Correspondence"

IN the summer of this year Pope made a determined attempt to break up the Blount household. Caryll—honest, unsuspicious Caryll—was involved in the plot, which, happily for Martha's reputation, proved unsuccessful. The campaign opened with accusations brought against the character of the once-admired Teresa. There were many vague rumours, but only two definite charges, founded on scandals spread by dismissed servants. Writing to Caryll on July 20, Pope says that Teresa[1] has an intrigue of half a year's standing with a married man. "The circumstances of this I am not to tell, but if those nearest to her say true, are very flagrant. The other fault is outrage to the mother past all imagination, striking, pinching, pulling about the house, and abusing to the utmost shamefulness." Patty, he explains, had done her best to conceal these doings, but was in a fair way to be implicated in her sister's disgrace. He

[1] Teresa is frequently referred to as "the Lady Sola."

suggests that Mrs. Blount would be much better off in a "religious house," while Patty should be assisted to set up for herself.

Caryll was at first much alarmed, and anxious to do anything in his power to put an end to such a terrible state of things. He promised that Mrs. Caryll should write to Mrs. Blount about the reports, and invite her and Patty to stay, without Teresa, so that the matter might be discussed. Nothing came of this project, for the mother showed the letter to Teresa, and when an invitation came for the younger sister alone Patty was ill in bed, and unable to accept. Mrs. Blount, it would appear, took the part of her elder daughter, to whom she was deeply attached. She saw, moreover, that there would be a difficulty in making two ends meet if the household were broken up, and each member had to depend on her own little income. No corroboration of Pope's charges came from Martha herself, and in time Caryll seems to have suspected that the evil report had been exaggerated, to say the least of it. Pope was indignant at the refusal of both mother and younger daughter to accuse the elder of ill-conduct towards them. "It is a strange fate," he exclaims, "for one very ill creature to be concealed, and indeed, by the concealment, encouraged by the very two people that suffer from her."

It may be gathered that Caryll had offered to help his goddaughter to leave home if things were as bad as had been represented, for on November 20 Pope says that Martha has shown him a letter which gave him a full view of his friend's worth. But her knowledge that the junction of her income with

that of her family helped to secure them from ruin prevented her from taking steps to leave them. "I have often represented to her of late, since the conduct of her sister," he adds, "that even in that view she had better lend them the equivalent, and live out of the danger and discredit."

Pope disclaims all suggestion that he had a *tendresse* for Patty. He says that he knows himself too well to indulge in any, and her too well to expect as much folly in his favour as she showed to her relations. "I receive a secret contentment in knowing I have no tie to your goddaughter but a good opinion, which has grown into a friendship with experience that she deserves it."

In the autumn of this year Pope began the curious series of manœuvres which led up to the publication of his correspondence. He had been inclined, from early youth, to set a high value on his letters; indeed, it would almost seem as if he thought them superior to his poetry. The interest aroused by the publication of his correspondence with Cromwell proved that the public was inclined to rate him at his own value as a writer of letters. The appearance, in the previous year, of Wycherley's "Remains," edited by Theobald, at the request of Captain Shrimpton, who had married Wycherley's widow, enraged Pope, who chose to think that no one but himself had any right to meddle with the old dramatist's papers. On September 15 he wrote to ask Lord Oxford if he would allow "some original papers and letters, both of my own and some of my friends, to be in your library in London. There seems already to be

From an engraving by G. Vertue after the painting by M. Dahl

EDWARD, EARL OF OXFORD.

N.Y. PUBLIC LIBRARY

an occasion of it from a publication of certain posthumous pieces of Mr. Wycherley, very unfair and derogatory to his memory, as well as injurious to me, who had the sole supervisal of them entrusted me at his earnest desire in his lifetime,[1] and something will be necessary to be done to clear both his and my reputation, which the letters under his hand will abundantly do."

Pope explains that the work he had been engaged upon for some time, namely, collecting the papers and letters of former correspondents, had advanced to some bulk, and he piqued himself on the fact that this correspondence would settle the truth of a number of incidents relating to history and criticism, and also to the private life and character of eminent men of his time. "Really, my lord," he concludes, "I am in hopes I shall in this make no disagreeable nor invaluable present to your manuscript library."

Lord Oxford did not jump at this handsome offer, and two or three weeks later Pope wrote again to beg for leave to deposit the manuscripts of his correspondence with Wycherley in the famous library, adding—"I would not appear myself as the publisher of them, but any man else may, or even the bookseller be supposed to have procured copies of them, formerly or now, it is equal."[2] Lord Oxford replied that his house would be honoured by

[1] An inaccurate statement. Wycherley had asked Pope's temporary assistance with regard to certain manuscripts, but he had not appointed him his literary executor.

[2] This was evidently intended as a hint that Lord Oxford should arrange for the publication of the letters. But the hint was not taken.

the proposed deposit, and that Pope was welcome to mention his library in any manner he pleased.

Even the easy-going peer must have been startled at the use that was at once made of his permission. On October 10 Pope wrote to say that he had consulted Mr. Lewis about the preface to a volume on Wycherley that he was bringing out as a supplement to Theobald's, and continues : "I have exceeded, perhaps, my commission in one point, though we both judged it in the right way, for I have made the publishers say that your lordship permitted them to have a copy of some papers from the library where the originals remain, as testimonies of the truth. It is indeed no more than a justice to the dead and to the living author, one of which I have the happiness to know you are concerned for ; and the other had too much merit to have his laurels blasted, fourteen years after his death, by an unlicensed and presumptuous mercenary." [1]

The subject of his correspondence continued to engross the poet's mind. Writing to Swift on November 28, he says : "This letter, like all mine, will be a rhapsody; it is many years since I wrote as a wit. How many occurrences or informations must one omit, if one is determined to say nothing that one could not say prettily !" He has lately received from the widow of one deceased correspondent [2] and father of another [3] the letters that he had written

[1] An absurd description of Theobald, who had authority from the widow to publish Wycherley's "Remains," and who was not more mercenary than any other man who writes for money.

[2] Edward Blount, of Blagdon.

[3] The Hon. Robert Digby.

fifteen or twenty years before, and is amused to see by what degrees he ceased to be a witty writer. To the dean, whom he loved the most, he wrote openly and more negligently—what the world would call worse—than to all the rest. "I smile to think how Curll would be bit were our epistles to fall into his hands, and how gloriously they would fall short of every ingenious reader's expectation."

Speaking of his feeling of premature decay, which makes him at least the equal in age of the dean, he continues: "My first friendship at sixteen was contracted with a man of seventy, and I found him not grave enough or consistent enough for me, though we lived well to his death. I speak of old Mr. Wycherley, some letters of whom, by the bye, and of mine, the booksellers have got and printed.[1] I do not much approve of it, though there is nothing for me to be ashamed of, because I will not be ashamed of anything I do not do myself, or of anything that is not immoral, but merely dull."

The letter concludes with a friendly rebuke to Swift for having complained to Lord Carteret that Pope was not given a pension. The poet declares that he had never thought himself so warm in either party's cause as to deserve a pension. All the same, he was no enemy to the present Constitution or to the Established Church. "I am of the religion of Erasmus," he boasts. "So I live, so I shall die. I hope one day to meet you, Bishop Atterbury, the younger Craggs, Dr. Garth, Dean Berkeley,

[1] This is a suggestion that Lord Oxford conspired with the booksellers to print the Wycherley Letters without Pope's knowledge.

and Mr. Hutchinson in that place to which God, of His infinite mercy, brings us and everybody."

The mention of Atterbury recalls the bishop's last (published) letter to Pope. This was written from Montpelier on November 20, just after the death of his devoted daughter, Mrs. Morice.[1] As soon as his mind was somewhat recovered from its grief, Atterbury says that he hopes to write something that may be of use to his fellow-men.

"In the meantime," he continues, "I shall be pleased to hear that you proceed in what you intend, without any such melancholy interruptions as I have met with. Your mind is as yet unbroken by age and ill accidents, your knowledge and judgment are at the height: use them in writing somewhat that may teach the present and future times, and if not gain equally the applause of both, may yet rise the envy of the one and secure the admiration of the other. Employ not your precious moments and great talents on little men and little things, but choose a subject every way worthy of you, and handle it as you can, in a manner which no one else can equal or imitate."

The bishop had changed his views again since he urged Pope to proceed in the satirical vein shown in his "Character of Addison." "The Dunciad," or at least its fame, must have reached him in his exile, and, looking upon the world with clearer eyes, he saw the futility of writing great satire on little men,

[1] Although far gone in a consumption, Mrs. Morice had undertaken the long and difficult journey in order to see her father once more before she died. She died at Toulouse only twenty hours after landing at Bordeaux.

and desired that his friend should use his genius to nobler ends.

The great subject was already on the stocks. Bolingbroke had given the material for the didactic philosophical poem which was afterwards to be known as "The Essay on Man." In a letter to Swift[1] dated November 9, Bolingbroke says that he has never quitted the design of collecting, revising, improving, and extending the historical materials which are still in his hands. Many important papers are lost, but he hopes to convey several great truths to posterity so clearly and authentically that the Burnets and Oldmixons of another day may rail, but not be able to deceive.

"I have taken up more of this paper than belongs to me," he concludes, "since Pope is to write to you. No matter, for, upon recollection, the rules of proportion are not broken ; he will say as much to you in one page as I have said in three. Bid him talk to you of the work he is about, I hope in good earnest. It is a fine one, and will be, in his hands, an original. His sole complaint is that he finds it too easy in the execution. This flatters his laziness. It flatters my judgment, who always thought that, universal as his talents are, this is eminently and peculiarly his, above all the writers I know, living or dead ; I do not except Horace."

[1] This is a joint letter, the first half being written by Bolingbroke, the second by Pope.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

1730

"The Grub Street Journal"—The "One Epistle"—Hugh Bethel—Accident to Mrs. Pope—Pope's Retired Life

A SEVERE epidemic of influenza raged in the winter of 1729–30, and the mortality in London alone was stated to be at the rate of a thousand a week. Pope suffered from two attacks, which must have further weakened his frail constitution. Yet, with spirit undaunted, he continued his almost single-handed fight against the enemies that his own satire had conjured up. To aid him in his campaign, he started a new weekly, which was to be run almost entirely in his own interests. This was *The Grub Street Journal*, the first number of which appeared on January 8, 1730. The literary department of the new journal was supposed to be conducted by a society of critics, called "Knights of the Bathos." The secretary was "Mr. Bavius"; political articles were dealt with by "Mr. Quidnunc," poetry by "Mr. Poppy," and the historiographer was "Giles Blunderbuss."

The ostensible editors of the journal were Dr.

John Martyn, a Professor of Botany,[1] and Dr. Richard Russell, who was formerly identified with a well-known physician of that name. Recent researches, however, tend to prove that Russell was in reality one Russel, a non-juring clergyman, who lived in Smith Square, Westminster. There is little doubt that Savage also took a considerable share in the management of the paper. A part of the contents consisted of ordinary news, but the distinguishing feature of the journal was the large number of personal attacks, by means of letters, epigrams, and advertisements, that were levelled at the detractors of Pope.[2]

The fact of the poet's connection with *The Grub Street Journal* soon became an open secret, though his friends may have pretended to accept his disclaimers. Eustace Budgell, in his paper, *The Bee*, was frequently at loggerheads with his Grub Street contemporary, and openly names Pope—"that little envious animal"—as the author of the stinging epigrams and the inspirer of the libellous satires that appeared in the new weekly.[3]

[1] He was Cambridge Professor of Botany. He published several botanical works, and also translations of Virgil's "Georgics" and "Bucolics."

[2] Welsted, Moore-Smythe, and Dennis are those who received the chief share of attention, but in the earlier volumes of the journal there are many adverse criticisms of Fielding's farces. Fielding does not appear to have been the aggressor, but Pope disapproved of him partly on account of the indecency of his plays, and partly because he had attacked priests in *The Old Debauchees*.

[3] In the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot" the following couplet appears:

> Let Budgell charge low Grub Street on his quill,
> And write whate'er he please, except his will.

In the course of the spring Moore-Smythe and Welsted published their satire, the "One Epistle," which was a counterblast to the "Two Epistles," a poem in defence of Pope and all his works, published by Dr. Young. In their Preface Welsted and Moore-Smythe contradict Pope's statement that he never attacked any person who had not first attacked him. Several of the gentlemen satirised in the "Bathos" had never written a word against Pope, while those who only ventured to criticise his poetry had their moral characters traduced by him. In the versified "One Epistle" Pope is described as a bard who had explored each century's rubbish, and plundered every dunce that had written before—

> Catching half-lines till the tuned verse went round,
> Complete in dull, smooth unity of sound.

Having alienated his friends, cheated his collaborators, "betrayed his patrons, and lampooned his God," there was only one course left open to the poet:

> When minor dunces cease at length their strife,
> And own their patent to be dull for life;
> By tricks sustained, in poet craft complete,
> Retire triumphant to thy T'wicknam seat;
> That seat, the work of half-paid, drudging Br—me,
> And called by joking Tritons "Homer's Tomb."

Pope tried to persuade Broome to defend him publicly against the accusation that the work done on the "Odyssey" had been underpaid. "I was moved at nothing the scribblers said of you," he writes on May 2, "further than to a just desire of having it known that I had not engaged your pains for nothing, than which you are sensible there could not be any part more disreputable to me."

After the lies trumped up against him by James Moore and other scoundrels in the "One Epistle," he feels that it would be but honourable in any fair-minded man to contradict the charges publicly. For his own part, he knows himself to be an honest, high-principled man, but he will not stoop to answer the accusations, or to appear as his own defendant.

The compliant Broome wrote some kind of acknowledgment that he was satisfied with the treatment he had received; but this probably did not go far enough for Pope, who in his next letter declares that his enemies are unworthy of a reply. "I take yours very kindly, and would make use of it against so lying a slander, did not my contempt of the liars prevail infinitely above my regard of what such fellows can say. . . ."

Pope found himself compelled to write his own defence to the accusations brought against him in the "One Epistle." Two articles in *The Grub Street Journal* (May 14 and 21) deal with these charges, and were undoubtedly dictated by himself.[1] He

[1] The conductors of the journal invite any person of credit and character to stand forth and attest certain of the accusations brought forward in the "One Epistle." For example:

"That Mr. P. ever writ or spoke complimentary or over-civilly of or to Chartres?

"Would flatter Chartres or would libel Young.

"That Mr. Fenton and he were ever at distance or variance with each other?

"By Fenton left, by reverend linguists hated,
Now learns to read the Greek he once translated.

"That Mr. Addison, or any other but Mr. P., writ or altered one line of the Prologue to *Cato*:

"Who Cato's muse with faithless sneers belied,
The prologue flattered, and the play decried."

still, however, denied his connection with the journal. On May 17, alluding to the very number in which a part of his defence appeared, he writes to Lord Oxford—"I have just seen *The Grub Street Journal*, and disapprove it."

The work of collecting and arranging the poet's correspondence was being industriously carried on. Swift, to whom the project had been confided, gave a candid opinion about the value of letters that had been written with an eye to publication.

"I find you have been a writer of letters almost from your infancy," he observes, "and, by your own confession, had schemes even then of epistolary fame. Montaigne says that if he could have excelled in any kind of writing, it would have been in letters; but I doubt they would not have been natural, for it is plain that all Pliny's letters were written with a view of publishing, and I accuse Voiture himself of the same crime, although he be an author I am fond of. They cease to be letters when they become a *jeu d'esprit*."

Among Pope's more intimate friends and correspondents was Hugh Bethel, a Yorkshire gentleman, who lived at Beswick, in the East Riding, and was M.P. for Beverley. As early as 1717 Pope had given him a copy of his poems, with a Latin inscription, showing that they were even then on terms of friendship. Bethel afterwards makes his appearance as "blameless Bethel" in the "Essay on Man," and as the English Ofella in one of the "Imitations of Horace." There are a few letters to Hugh Bethel and his brother Slingsby in Pope's published correspondence, but in the British Museum

there is a volume containing a number of unpublished letters, beginning with this year—1730. Bethel, who suffered from chronic asthma, usually paid a visit to town every year, and Pope seldom omitted to write to him after his departure.

"It pleases God," he writes on June 9, "that my mother is much the better for the advance of the summer season, and I think I am so too (though often put in mind of my ill constitution by headaches on the least turn of the weather). I lately commemorated you with Mr. Day, who for three hours could talk of nothing but Sir Robert Walpole and yourself, so equally are his affections and respects divided. For my own part, I cannot but make some difference; on which side it lies, I will not say to you.

"Mrs. Blount came to the country not till this week. It pleases Heaven that it is not yet the country, nor properly deserves that odious name, for the Court is yet at Richmond. It moves next week to Windsor. Our friend is as usual in her health, and as usual in her endeavours to mend it. But this day she had a talk with Dr. Arbuthnot, and he has prescribed a bitter and Spaw waters, which she will, or will not take.[1] Lady Denbigh is also arrived here with a set of horses that might create envy even in the breeders of Yorkshire.[2] Mr.

[1] Pope was much annoyed with Miss Blount because she refused to try all kinds of remedies, quack or otherwise, though he set her the example.

[2] Lady Mary Wortley, writing to her sister in 1727 says: "Our dear and amiable cousin, Lady Denbigh, was blazed out on her return from Paris in cartloads of ribbons and surprising fashions, and keeps a Sunday assembly to show that she has learnt to play at cards on that day." Lady Denbigh was a daughter of Peter de Yong, of Utrecht, and wife of the fifth Earl,

Cleland remembers you over his volumes, and over his cups, and sends you hearty and honest services. I have had a new lampoon[1] (I think it was since you went) in which he is spared and Dr. Arbuthnot abused, which I am the less sorry for because he went to expostulate with the scrub writer of it. It is below all notice, and contains as many lies as lines, being purely personal. James Moore owned it, and 'twas made by three others, and he will disown it when any man vexes him for it. . . ."[2]

On July 13 Elijah Fenton died, being then in his forty-eighth year. Broome wrote a pathetic letter to Pope, describing the great loss that he had sustained, and expressing a hope that the poet would build a lasting monument to their friend, with an epitaph or elegy. Pope promised that he would with pleasure take upon him to draw "this amiable, quiet, deserving, unpretending Christian and philosophical character" in his epitaph. This pious duty he afterwards performed, and the epitaph beginning—

> This modest stone, what few vain marbles can,
> May truly say, Here lies an honest man—

may be found in his works.

Throughout the year Pope was in close and devoted attendance on his mother, who, in June, entered upon her ninety-first year.[3] Her memory was much diminished, he tells Swift, but her sight and hearing were good, and her senses very little

[1] This is, presumably, another allusion to the "One Epistle."

[2] From the unpublished MS.

[3] Pope gives this as her age, but there is reason to believe that she was two years younger.

hurt. "She sleeps not ill, eats moderately, drinks water, says her prayers." To have an object of this kind ever before a man's eyes softened the mind, he believed, but hindered it from contracting other domestic ties. Perhaps it was wiser to live extempore, and look upon the world only as a place to pass through, pay your hosts their due, disperse a little charity, and hurry on. "Yet am I just now writing, or rather planning, a book to make mankind look upon this life in comfort and pleasure, and put morality in good humour!"[1]

In October the venerable Mrs. Pope had a marvellous escape from a premature death. "She fell into the fire," writes her son, "without touching the clothes she had on, at least a yard about. Her back lay on the grate, but her head, though dressed in muslin, reclining sideways, was not burnt. The shock of the fall and blow has much hurt her, but after a week or two she recovered of all but her feebleness."

To sit by his mother's bedside, awaiting her death, was not a cheerful or healthy occupation for a man of Pope's age or constitution, but he never shirked their duty. On October 1 he had written to Gay, who was then living with the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry at Amesbury:

"I have been putting my library in order and enlarging the chimney in it, with equal intention to warm my mind and body, if I can, to some life. A friend—a woman friend, God help me!—with whom I have spent three or four hours a day these fifteen years, advised me to pass more time in my

[1] The "Essay on Man."

studies. I reflected, she must have found some reason for this admonition, and concluded she would complete all her kindnesses to me by returning me to the employment I am fittest for—conversation with the dead, the old, and the worm-eaten."

In another letter to the same friend he complains that his mind finds no amendment nor support from those about him. "Companions I have enough, friends few, and those too warm in the concerns of the world for me to keep pace with; or else so divided from me that they are but like the dead whose remembrance I hold in honour. Nature, temper, and habit from my youth made me have but one strong desire. All other ambitions my person, education, constitution, religion, etc., conspired to remove far from me. That desire was to fix and preserve a few lasting, dependable friendships; and the accidents which have disappointed me in it have put a period to all my aims. So I am sunk into an idleness which makes me neither care nor labour to be noticed by the rest of mankind."

Pope can tell his friend of no books worth reading, for the whole age seemed resolved to justify "The Dunciad." There might indeed be a wooden image or two of poetry set up, to preserve the memory that there were once bards in Britain, and at present the poor Laureate [1] and Stephen Duck [2] served such

[1] Eusden died in 1730, and was succeeded as Laureate by Cibber.

[2] Stephen Duck (1705-56). He began life as a country labourer. His poems having been brought to the notice of Queen Caroline, he was made a Yeoman of the Guard. He afterwards took orders, and became Rector of Byfleet. He committed suicide

a purpose. The one, a drunken parson, held forth the emblem of inspiration; the other, an honest thresher, represented pain and labour.

"I hope this phenomenon of Wiltshire has appeared at Amesbury," continues the poet, "or the duchess will be thought insensible to all bright qualities and exalted genius in Court and country alike. But he is a harmless man, and therefore I am glad."

Pope himself declares that he has almost given up writing poetry. He very rarely "dips his pen," but when he does it is only from the highest, purest motives. "The vanity is now over, and unless I could hope to do it to some good end, or to a better pitch than I have hitherto done, I would never return to the lists. But the truth is, it is now in my hopes—God knows whether it may ever prove in my power—to contribute to some honest and moral purposes in writing on human life and manners, not exclusive of religious regards, and I have many fragments which I am beginning to put together, but nothing perfect or finished."

in a fit of depression. According to Warburton, the queen asked Pope's opinion of Duck's verses, but requested him to read them without unstitching the two first leaves, which she had sewed down to conceal the name of the author. Pope quickly discovered the condition of the poet by the quality of the poetry, and said he supposed most villages could furnish verses of the same force; but, hearing a good character of the writer, he did all he could to establish him at Court, and frequently called upon him at Richmond.

CHAPTER XXXIX

1731

Controversy with Aaron Hill—Serious Illness—Country Visits—Theobald's "Shakespeare"

IT was rarely indeed that one of Pope's victims got the better of him in the warfare of words, but this distinction befel Aaron Hill, who had fallen foul of Pope for a supposed adverse criticism of his poem "The Northern Star." Although Hill had apologised for his attacks upon Pope, while labouring under a misconception, the poet had never quite forgiven him. Hill was introduced under the initials "A. H." among the Flying Fishes in "The Bathos,"[1] and also made his appearance in the first edition of "The Dunciad." In the account of the famous diving-match, the following lines occur :

> H—— tried the next, but, hardly snatched from sight,
> Instant buoys up and rises into light ;
> He bears no tokens of the sabler streams,
> And mounts far off, among the swans of Thames.

In the edition of 1729 the passage begins, "Then

[1] The Flying Fishes were writers "who now and then rise upon their fins, and fly out of the profund ; but their wings are soon dry, and they sink to the bottom." Pope assured Hill that the initials were chosen at random.

* * tried," and the note explains that this is an instance of the tenderness of the author: "The person here intended wrote an angry preface against him founded on a mistake, which he afterwards honourably acknowledged in another printed preface. Since when he fell into a second mistake, and abused both him and his friend. . . .[1] Our poet here gives him a panegyric instead of a satire, being edified beyond measure by the only instance he ever met with in his life of one who was much a poet confessing himself in error; and has suppressed his name, as thinking him capable of a second repentance."

In 1730 Hill had published a satirical poem called "The Progress of Wit; a Caveat for the use of an Eminent Writer," under the name of Gamaliel Gunson. In this Pope is represented as neglecting true fame for the praise of fools, and is blamed for engaging in a conflict with wasps, gnats, and flies. The poem opens with the lines:

> Tuneful Alexis on the Thames' fair side,
> The ladies' plaything and the Muse's pride;
> With merit popular, with wit polite,
> Easy though vain, and elegant though light,
> Desiring and deserving other's praise,
> Poorly accepts a fame he ne'er repays;
> Unborn to cherish, sneakingly approves;
> And wants the soul to spread the worth he loves.

The sting of the passage lay in the fact that, like Pope's own "Character of Addison," it mingled blame and praise, instead of dealing out nothing but stupid abuse. Pope seems to have recognised that this adversary was a dangerous man, for when

[1] The second mistake was to identify himself with the "A. H." of the Flying Fishes.

Hill made advances towards another reconciliation by sending some copies of his publication, *The Plain Dealer* to Twickenham together with a "gentle complaint" about the note in "The Dunciad," Pope replied in a friendly letter (January 26), reminding Hill of former errors, already acknowledged, and the attacks that gentleman had made while labouring under a misconception.

"I should imagine 'The Dunciad' meant you a real compliment," he observes, "and so it has been thought by many who have asked to whom that passage made that oblique panegyric. As to the notes, I am weary of telling a great truth, which is, that I am not the author of them. . . ."

"Have I not much more reason to complain of the "Caveat"?[1] Where, give me leave, sir, to tell you, with the same love of truth, and with the frankness it inspired (which I hope you will see through this whole letter) I am falsely abused in being represented sneakingly to approve, and want the worth to cherish or befriend men of merit. It is indeed, sir, a very great error; I am sorry that the author of the reflection knew me no better. . . . I do faithfully assure you, I never was angry at any criticism made on my poetry by whomsoever. If I could do Mr. Dennis any humane office I would,[2] though I were sure he would abuse

[1] A few of the notes were not by Pope, and, to one with his peculiar views about "genteel equivocation," this would be thought sufficient justification for a denial of the authorship of the notes in general.

[2] This is no empty boast. Pope furnished the Prologue when a performance of *The Provoked Husband* was given for Dennis's benefit in December 1733, shortly before his death.

me personally to-morrow; therefore it is no great merit in me to find, at my heart, I am your servant. . . . Had we known one another, you had distinguished me from others, as a man, and no ill, nor ill-natured one. I only wish you knew, as well as I do, how much I prefer qualities of the heart to those of the head. I vow to God I never thought any great matters of my poetical capacity; I only thought it a little better, comparatively, than that of some very mean writers who are too proud. But I do know certainly, my moral life is superior to that of most of the wits of these days."

Two days later Hill replied in an excellent letter, which deserves to be quoted almost *in extenso*. He is practically the only one of Pope's contemporaries who, while appreciating the poet's genius, had the courage to deal with his moral blemishes in a candid, though perfectly temperate spirit. He begins by remarking upon the "weakness" of Pope's letter, and proceeds:

"To imitate your love of truth with the frankness you have taught me, I wish the great qualities of your heart were as strong in you as the good ones: you would then have been above that emotion and bitterness wherewith you remember things which want weight to deserve your anguish.

"Since you were not the author of the notes to 'The Dunciad,' it would be impertinent to trouble you with the complaint I intended. . . . As to your oblique panegyric, I am not under so blind an attachment to the goddess I was devoted to in 'The Dunciad' but that I knew it was a commendation, though a dirtier one than I wished for, who am

neither fond of some of the company in which I was listed, the noble reward for which I was to become a diver, the allegoric muddiness in which I was to try my skill, nor the institutor of the games you were so kind as to allow me a share in. . . ."

Hill frankly admits the authorship of "The Progress of Wit," and adds that he is writing an "Essay on Propriety and Impropriety, in Design, Thought, and Expression, illustrated by examples in both kinds from the writings of Mr. Pope." He now offers to alter it to "illustrated by examples of the first (Propriety) from the writings of Mr. Pope, and the last (Impropriety) from those of the author."

"I was sorry," he continues, "to hear you say you never thought any great matters of your poetry. It is, in my opinion, the characteristic you are to hope your distinction from. To be honest is the duty of every plain man. Nor, since the soul of poetry is sentiment, can a great poet want morality. But your honesty you possess in common with a million, who will never be remembered, whereas your poetry is a peculiar, that will make it impossible you should be forgotten.

"If you had not been in the spleen when you wrote me this letter I persuade myself you would not, immediately after censuring the pride of writers, have asserted that you certainly know your moral life above that of most of the wits of these days. At any other time you would have remembered that humility is a moral virtue. It was a bold declaration, and the certainty with which you know it stands in need of a better acquaintance than

you seem to have had with the tribe, since you tell me that many of their names were unknown to you. Neither would it appear to your own reason, at a cooler juncture, over-consistent with the morality you are so sure of, to scatter the letters of the whole alphabet annexed at random to characters of a light and ridiculous cast, confessedly with intent to provoke jealous writers into resentment, that you might take occasion from that resentment to expose and depreciate their character."

Pope, for once, seems to have realised that he was worsted in the discussion, and his reply is almost incredibly shuffling and evasive. He tries to make Hill believe, without actually asserting the fact, that the lines in "The Dunciad" were meant for another person. "When I told you many asked me for whom that oblique praise was meant (in 'The Dunciad') I did not tell you I answered it was you. Has it escaped your observation that the name is a syllable too long?[1] Or, if you will have it a Christian name, is there any other in the whole book? Is there no author of two syllables whom it will not better fit, not only as getting out of the allegorical muddiness, but as having been dipped in the dirt of party-writing, and recovering from it betimes?"

The poet was keenly annoyed at the accusation that he did not praise good authors, and begs to have named the man or men to whom he had unjustly omitted approbation or encouragement. He declares that he had publicly praised all the best

[1] Hill must have known, as well as Pope, that in the first edition a one-syllabled name was used—"H— tried the next."

writers of the period,[1] except Hill himself, and such as he has had no opportunity to praise, but of the great and popular he has praised few, and those at the time when they were least popular. He does not explain how it was that he praised and admired the work of poor writers, whose sole claim to his regard was that they had written laudatory essays or poems about himself.

In reply to a request from Caryll for the names of some good new books, he recommends "Harlequin Horace," by James Miller,[2] and "An Essay on Satire," by Walter Harte,[3] both worthless pieces

[1] Pope had not publicly praised such writers as Bentley, Defoe, or Steele, but chiefly his own personal friends, such as Swift, Young, and Gay.

[2] James Miller (1706-44) was an unsuccessful playwright, among whose forgotten poems are *The Humours of Oxford*, *The Man of Taste*, and *The Coffee-house*. He published "Harlequin Horace; or, the Art of Modern Poetry," in 1731. This is a satire in which Pope's enemies, Dennis, Welsted, and company, are ridiculed. The following lines show Miller's quality, and the reason that Pope appreciated his work:

> What though in Pope's harmonious lays combine
> All that is lovely, noble, and divine;
> Though every part with wit and nature glows,
> And from each line a sweet instruction flows;
> Though through the whole the loves and graces smile,
> Polish the manners, and adorn the style?
> Yet still, unhappily, to sense tied down,
> He's ignorant of the art to please the town.

[3] Walter Harte (1709-74). He was a youth at Oxford at the time that he published his "Essay on Satire." He afterwards became travelling tutor to young Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield's natural son. He published a "Life of Gustavus Adolphus" and some religious poems. The following is one of the tributes paid by him to Pope's poetry:

> A thousand charms at once my thoughts engage—
> Sappho's soft sweetness, Pindar's warmer rage,
> Statius' free vigour, Virgil's studious care,
> And Homer's force and Ovid's easier air.

by writers who would certainly have been clapped into "The Dunciad" if they had not bought their immunity by fulsome praise of Pope.

Pope's work was interrupted this spring by a long and serious illness, beginning with a severe rheumatic pain in the shoulder-joint, which kept him sleepless till a fever succeeded. He was treated to the usual course of phlebotomy, plasters, blisters, and purging, which so reduced him that, after nine weeks' pain and confinement, he had become but "a scrap of himself," and was ordered to forgo all study and exercise, and do nothing but eat, drink asses' milk, and sleep. Swift urged him to "descend, in the name of God, to some other amusements, as common mortals do. Learn to play at cards, or tables, or bowls; get talking females, who will go on or stop at your commands; contrive new tramgams in your garden."

The dean complained that he was unhappy in having so many sickly friends, including Lord and Lady Bolingbroke, Arbuthnot, Pope, and Gay, who were not able to make up one sturdy, healthy person among them. "If I were to begin the world again," he declares, "I would never make an acquaintance with a poor or sickly man, with whom there might be any danger of contracting a friendship."

In April Hugh Bethel paid his annual visit to London, and then went to Scarborough to take the cure. Pope wrote to ask him for an analysis of the waters, and to congratulate him upon his good sense in taking care of his health.

"I am glad," he says (May 5), "that you will

do what Mrs. Patty will not; I hope to receive the fruit of your journey at your return, in seeing you in such spirits as will enable you to enjoy yourself, and render us more capable of enjoying you.

["I thank you for your thoughts of me, and wishes for me, but I am tied down from any distant flights. A horse hereabouts must be like a carrier's horse, always in the road, for my life (as you know) is perpetually carrying me between this place and London. To this narrow horizon my course is confined; and I fancy it will end here, and I shall soon take up my turn at Twitnam Church or at Westminster, as it happens to be my last stage.]

"I fear Mrs. B. will fear Scarborough waters; she has the hydrophobia upon her; she is (with all her faults) your sincere friend, and does you justice in every opinion and regard. We join in hearty services to you. My poor old woman is hardly able to be hearty now in anything. She is weak to such a degree as not to speak, even to me, thrice in twenty-four hours, and lies almost wholly in bed, without any appetite." [1]

The greater part of July seems to have been spent with the John Knights[2] at Gosfield, while August was passed between visits to Stowe and Windsor, and a tour through Oxfordshire. On July 28 Pope wrote to Bethel:

"I have just finished an epistle in verse upon

[1] Except for the passage in brackets, this letter is here first published.

[2] Mrs. Knight was a sister of Secretary Craggs. She was married, first, to John Newsham, secondly to John Knights, M.P. for St. Germains, and thirdly to Robert Nugent, afterwards Earl Nugent.

the nature and extent of good-nature and social affection;[1] and am going upon another whose subject is the true happiness of man, in which I shall prove the best men the happiest, and consequently you should pull off your hat to me for painting you as the happiest man in the universe. I do not think it will at all diminish that felicity if I should acquaint you that the king does not go his progress this summer, and that even your (too much beloved) Yorkshire will be deprived of the joy his aspect would have given it. Do you think the county would be the less northern if his majesty's gracious countenance had shined upon it? . . . I fear the people of your climate must expect their health and spirits this year rather from the Scarborough water? I fancy you are there, so I wish I were with you. . . . Mrs. B[lount] is just as solicitous and careful of her pecuniary life as of her bodily one; but she forgets not you so much as she does herself."[2]

On August 22 Pope was at Windsor, as we learn from a letter from Lady Suffolk to Gay, in which she says: "Mr. Pope has been to see me: Lord Burlington brought him. He dined and supped with my lady all the time he stayed: he was heartily tired all the time, and I not much pleased, though I thought myself exceedingly obliged to him for his visit." On August 23 the poet was at Stowe, whence he wrote to the Knights. He declares that he never passed an easier or more agreeable month than that of the previous July. Though Stowe is more beautiful than ever, he will not stay there so

[1] The "Essay on Man." [2] From the unpublished MS.

long, by a fortnight, as he did at Gosfield. Patty Blount was a friend of the Knights, and Pope says, in the course of his letter:

"Mrs. Patty languishes in town, and diets there on fools in defect of friends. I am sorry to forsake her at such a time; and she is more sorry you live at such a distance. Her sister affirms nobody of sense can live six miles out of London; and indeed I know of nothing that can set her right but the free use of the cane you bestowed on me, and which I could wish to bestow upon her."

Pope was obliged to cut short his visits on account of the increasing weakness of his mother, and in September he was settled again at Twickenham. The correspondence between Pope and Hill became a source of considerable boredom to the poet. Hill wrote him interminable letters, and sent him tragedies to read and correct in manuscript. Pope dared not decline the last, for there was that terrible "Essay on Propriety," to be illustrated from his own works, always hanging over his head. Besides, if he did not read and praise Hill, he would again be accused of inability to appreciate the works of other poets. Hill sent him a twenty-year-old tragedy called *Athelwold*, which was said to have been written in little more than a week. Pope professed to think the tragedy a really great work, but then he was accustomed to say that he found it more difficult to judge of dramatic poetry than of any other kind. Of the most material part—that is, the effect on the passions—he thought that any common reader was as well able to judge as the most learned.

Hill was naturally anxious to have his play produced, and in September Pope was using his influence to bring about the desired result. He persuaded Lady Suffolk to show the piece to the king and queen, he interested other great people in its success, and he recommended his own bookseller, Lawton Gilliver, as publisher. He promised to attend the first performance, well or ill, and to take Lord Bathurst, Lord Burlington, and other great men. The play was a failure, though Pope's letter, describing the first night, softens the fact. On November 14 he wrote to thank Hill for his pleasant evening, and adds :

"I see you can make actors as well as plays, yet I own I receive more pleasure from reading than seeing your *Athelwold*. I thought the best part of the audience very attentive, and was told several ladies were moved to tears. It is a pity Mrs. Cibber's voice and person were not a little higher ; she speaks extremely just, and seems to be mistress of her part. . . . I saw Lady Suffolk yesterday, and found that their majesties had not had time to read, yet they were possessed of a good opinion of the play."

Hill took his failure with pluck and good temper. Poor *Athelwold*, he admits, dragged himself along, for two lean nights after the first, as lame and wounded as the snake in Pope's poem,[1] but not half so delightfully. "It would be affectation, not modesty," he continues, "to deny that I am

[1] A needless Alexandrine ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.
Essay on Criticism.

not nettled at the monstrous reception which the town has given to this tragedy. But I find there is a two-fold obligation upon a tragic writer, if he would engage attention at our theatres: he must make audiences as well as plays: he must become a solicitor of his own commendation. . . . I should feel the liveliest indignation upon such an occasion as this is in the cause of another, but as the case is my own, I think—and smile—and am satisfied. I had rather be neglected to my mortification, than become popular to my infamy."

Theobald's edition of Shakespeare was announced to appear by subscription about this time, though it was not actually published till nearly two years later. There was an idea that Lintot possessed the copyright in Shakespeare's works, and Theobald had only lately awoke to the idea that he was free to publish the text as well as his own notes and emendations. These he regarded as his best answer to Pope's attacks. His edition was to be published by several booksellers, of whom Tonson was one.

Pope, who was extremely sensitive about his Shakespearean failure, wrote to Jacob Tonson, junior, to know if it was true that "Tibbald is to have the *text* of Shakespeare, *together* with his remarks printed by *you*. As I have heard nothing of this from you, I presume it is not so; at least that you, with whom I have lived ever upon amicable terms, will not be the publisher of any impertinences relating any way to my character, of which you cannot but know that man's specimens and letters concerning them have been full."

Tonson replied that he was only one of several

publishers concerned in the undertaking, which would go on, with or without his connivance. Theobald, he might have added, had never attacked Pope's character, and had dealt with his mistakes in a polite and temperate spirit. The poet made one last attempt to wreck his rival's enterprise. He told the elder Tonson that he could put him upon a way of publishing a new edition of Shakespeare which would vastly outsell both his own old one and Theobald's. The scheme was also to include editions of all the other greatest English poets. He assured Tonson that the public would thank him for this project, which none of the "Dutch-head scholiasts" were capable of executing.[1] But old Tonson had had enough of Pope and his editing. In the fulness of time Theobald's Shakespeare made its triumphant appearance, and, without the aid of libels, slanders, or even abusive criticism, gave Pope's edition its quietus.

[1] Pope probably had some idea of employing assistants in a task of editing. He himself would have been the ornamental figure-head, and his name would have served as a decoy.

CHAPTER XL

1731–2

The "Epistle to Lord Burlington"—Timon and Chandos—Hogarth on "Taste"—Miscellanies—Death of Gay

THE first of Pope's Moral Essays, "Taste," afterwards called "False Taste,"[1] appeared at the end of 1731. On December 1 the poet wrote to Swift:

"You will see a work of Lord B[olingbroke]'s[2] and one of mine, which, with a just neglect of the present age, consult only posterity, and, with a noble scorn of politics, aspire to philosophy. . . . I agree with you in my contempt of most popularity, fame, etc. Even as a writer I am cool in it, and whenever you see what I am now writing you will be convinced I would please but a few, and, if I could, make mankind less admirers and greater reasoners."

The Essay is in the form of an "Epistle to Lord Burlington," occasioned by his publishing Palladio's designs of the baths, arches, theatres, etc., of ancient Rome. According to the Argu-

[1] In Warburton's edition it appeared as the Fourth Moral Essay, and the second part of the discourse of the "Use of Riches." "False Taste" was by far the best title.

[2] His "Essay on Human Knowledge."

ment, it deals with the ostentation of expense in rich men and the abuse of the word "taste"; it states the theory that the first principle of taste (as of everything else) is good sense; and it shows that the chief proof of good sense is to follow nature in architecture and gardening. Examples are given of false taste and foolish extravagance; yet it is explained that Providence is justified in giving wealth to be squandered, since it is thus dispersed to the poor. Finally, an attempt is made to show what are the proper objects of magnificence, and the great public works that become a prince.

Turning from the Argument to the poem, we find the satirist making merry at the expense of the prodigal amateur collector who wastes his wealth "to purchase what he ne'er can taste." He imagines that he is buying rarities of all kinds for his own pleasure, whereas—

> He buys for Topham [1] drawings and designs,
> For Pembroke [2] statues, dirty gods, and coins;
> Rare monkish manuscripts for Hearne [3] alone,
> And books for Mead [4] and butterflies for Sloane.[5]

[1] Richard Topham, Keeper of the Records of the Tower, lived near Windsor. Pope says that he was "famous for a judicious collection of drawings."

[2] Henry, ninth Earl of Pembroke, who had a fine collection of old statues at Wilton.

[3] Thomas Hearne, the antiquary, already alluded to.

[4] Richard Mead (1674–1754), a distinguished physician. He collected a library of 10,000 volumes, which sold for over £5,000 at his death. He published "A Mechanical Account of Poisons," and a treatise on the influence of the sun and moon on human bodies. He attended George I., George II., and many distinguished men.

[5] Sir Hans Sloane, the famous collector.

Among the examples chosen are Sir Visto[1] and Bubo.[2]

> What brought Sir Visto's ill-got wealth to waste?
> Some demon whispered, "Visto! have a taste."
> Heaven visits with a taste the wealthy fool,
> And needs no rod but Ripley[3] with a rule,
> See! sportive Fate, to punish awkward pride,
> Bids Bubo build, and sends him such a guide.

Even the splendid designs published by Lord Burlington will, the poet fears—

> Fill half the land with imitating fools,
> Who random drawings from your sheets shall take,
> And of one beauty many blunders make.

There is only one guide which can save patrons and connoisseurs from wasting their money and making themselves ridiculous.

> Something there is more needful than expense,
> And something precious even to taste—'tis sense:
> Good sense, which only is the gift of Heaven,
> And, though no science, fairly worth the seven.

Then follows a poetical version of the new theory of landscape gardening, which Pope used to say was reducible to three heads: the contrasts, the management of surprises, and the concealment of the boundaries.[4]

[1] Sir Robert Walpole, who was "improving" Houghton.

[2] Bubb Dodington, afterwards Lord Melcombe.

[3] Thomas Ripley. He began life as a carpenter, but, being taken up by Sir Robert Walpole, was made Controller of the Board of Works, in place of Vanbrugh. He built the Admiralty, Whitehall.

[4] This is versified in the couplet:

> He gains all votes who pleasingly confounds,
> Surprises, varies, and conceals the bounds.

The gardener who follows the dictates of good sense will

> Consult the genius of the place in all,
> That tells the waters or to rise or fall;
> Or helps the ambitious hill the heavens to scale,
> Or scoops in circling theatres the vale.
> Calls in the country, catches opening glades,
> Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades;
> Now breaks, or now directs, the intending lines;
> Paints as you plant, and as you work designs.

But the most famous passage in the Epistle is that which describes a day spent at Timon's Villa. Timon's idea of greatness dwells in such designs as bring all Brobdignag before the mind.

> To compass this, his building is a town,
> His pond an ocean, his parterre a down:
> Who but must laugh, the master when he sees,
> A puny insect, shivering in a breeze?
> . . . . . .
> His gardens next your admiration call.
> On every side you look, behold a wall:
> No pleasing intricacies intervene,
> No artful wildness to perplex the scene:
> Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother,
> And half the platform just reflects the other.
> The suffering eye inverted nature sees,
> Trees cut to statues, statues thick as trees;
> With here a fountain never to be played,
> And there a summer-house that knows no shade.

The visitor, having dragged himself up slopes and along hot terraces, is received by my lord at the door of his study, where he is surrounded by bibliological treasures. It is useless, however, to ask with what authors the library is stored—"In

books, not authors, curious is my lord." He displays with pride their dated backs—

> These Aldus printed, those Du Sueil has bound,
> Lo, some are vellum, and the rest as good,
> For all his lordship knows, but they are wood.

Presently the chapel's silver bell summons host and guest to "all the pride of prayer."

> Light quirks of music, broken and uneven,
> Make the soul dance upon a jig to heaven.
> . . . . . .
> To rest the cushion and soft dean invite,
> Who never mentions hell to ears polite.

Then the chiming clocks call to dinner, and a hundred footsteps scrape the marble hall.

> Is this a dinner? This a genial room?
> No, 'tis a temple, and a hetacomb.
> A solemn sacrifice, performed in state;
> You drink by measure, and to minutes eat.
> . . . . . .
> Between each act the trembling salvers ring,
> From soup to sweet wine and "God bless the king."
> In plenty starving, tantalised in state;
> And complaisantly helped to all I hate.
> Treated, caressed, and tired, I take my leave,
> Sick of his civil pride from morn to eve;
> I curse such lavish cost and little skill,
> And swear no day was ever passed so ill.[1]

The character of Timon was at once identified with that of the Duke of Chandos,[2] who lived

[1] The poem concludes with a kind of justification for Timon's extravagance, on the grounds that "hence the poor are clothed, the hungry fed." Pope, like most of his contemporaries, was not strong on social economics.

[2] James Brydges, first Duke of Chandos (1673–1744). He had been Paymaster of the Forces abroad (1707–12). He succeeded

From a mezzotint engraving by J. Faber, 1734, after a painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller, 1716.

RICHARD BOYLE, EARL OF BURLINGTON.

in princely state at Canons. His household consisted of not less than a hundred and twenty persons, while his private chapel was famous for the beauty of its decorations, and also for the music at its services, a full choir being maintained.[1] Pope's enemies declared that the poet had received many benefits from Chandos, including a gift of £500,[2] and that the satire was an instance of rank ingratitude. Pope was surprised and distressed at the outcry that was raised against his work, not only by the Dunces, but by the public generally. Though there was from the first no real doubt that he took the general idea of Timon's Villa from Canons, yet, because some of the details had been altered, he sought to prove that the picture was an imaginary one.

Once again the accommodating Cleland was called in as a mouthpiece. In a letter to Gay, published in the newspapers for December 31, Cleland is made to say that he is astonished at the complaints occasioned by the recent Epistle, and should be afflicted were there the least ground for them. Had the poet attacked vice, at a time when it was not only tolerated but triumphant, he should have been apprehensive of the consequences; but he could not but fancy that an Epistle which only

as ninth Baron Chandos, was created Earl of Carnarvon in 1704, and Duke of Chandos in 1719. He built the splendid house at Canons, near the village of Edgware.

[1] The duke was a patron of Handel, who was director of the music at his private chapel from 1718 to 1723.

[2] There was no ground for this statement. The duke had subscribed for the "Iliad," and had received Pope once or twice as a guest.

attacked a single species of folly might escape censures. But it was said the satire was personal ; how could this be when it dealt with things, and not people ? The reflections were not on the man, but on his house and garden. As to the malicious application of the character, he observes that they impute it to a person who was the direct opposite of a man-hater, a person whose taste and encouragement of wit had often been shown in the right place, and who had particularly favoured the author of the Epistle. Throughout the letter there is no actual denial of the charge that Timon was Chandos, only roundabout evasions of the point, which could be brushed away if, in later editions, it should be found desirable to give the name.

Pope wrote himself to assure the duke that no personal satire had been intended, and Chandos replied, if Pope may be believed, with a statement, couched in the strongest and most humane terms, of his full belief in the poet's innocence. The letter was never published, however, and Johnson says that the duke accepted Pope's excuse without believing his profession. He observed that to have ridiculed his taste or his buildings had been an indifferent action in another man, but that in Pope, after the kindness that had been exchanged, the action would have been less easy to excuse.

Among the counterblasts to the "Epistle to Lord Burlington" was one entitled "A Miscellany of Taste," in which Welsted and Concanen[1] were sup-

[1] Mathew Concanen, a party-writer journalist, who was one of the victims of "The Dunciad." He attacked Pope in *Mist's Journal* and other papers. He was Attorney-General of Jamaica from 1732 to 1748.

posed to have a hand. It was chiefly remarkable, however, for a frontispiece by Hogarth, the suppressed plate known as "Taste: the Gate of Burlington House." This shows Pope, in the guise of a bricklayer's labourer, mounted on a scaffold, and engaged in whitewashing the gate of Burlington House. The Duke of Chandos, who drives through in a chariot, receives some splashes from his brush. On the top of the gateway is a statue of Kent, flanked by the recumbent figures of Raphael and Michelangelo. Hogarth had a grudge against Burlington, on account of the architect earl's patronage of Kent, the rival of Sir William Thornhill.[1] It is somewhat remarkable that Pope never took any notice of this caricature, or made a single attack on Hogarth. Perhaps he recognised that it would be more prudent to leave so dangerous an antagonist alone.[2]

Echoes of the Timon controversy are to be found in the private correspondence of this period. In a letter dated March 29, 1732, Pope alludes to "an imaginary reflection on a worthy peer in a poem of mine. The report was almost universal,

[1] Hogarth's father-in-law.

[2] Besides his alleged share in the "Miscellany of Taste," Welsted produced another piece against Pope, called "Dulness and Scandal," in which the following description is given of the poet:

> A soul corrupt that hireling praise suborns,
> That hates for genius, and for virtue scorns!
> A coxcomb's talents with a pedant's art!
> A bigot's fury in an atheist's heart!

Another bitter epigram on Pope for his Timon satire appeared about the same time:

> Let Pope no more what Chandos builds deride
> Because he takes not nature for his guide;
> Since, wondrous critic! in thy form we see
> That *nature* may mistake as well as he.

but so very groundless and silly that I do not yet know the effect it will have on my conduct—whether so great a stupidity in the point of comprehending a poet's manner, being the ignorance of the very principles of that sort of writing, and so great malignity in the point of applying it in the worse sense, should give me such a pique to the world's malice as never to publish anything, or such a contempt of its judgment as to publish everything which I think right myself, without the least concern about what they think or say. . . ."

Pope had already finished the Epistle to Lord Bathurst, "Of the Use of Riches," but, in consequence of the Timon scandal, he held it back till the following year. He was hard at work on the "Essay on Man," with Bolingbroke for "consulting philosopher," and he was also preparing another volume of Miscellanies.

"I think it a merit," he remarks, "if I can take off any man from grating or satirical subjects, merely on the score of party; and it is the greatest vanity of my life that I have contributed to turn my Lord Bolingbroke to subjects moral and useful, and more worthy his pen."

Pope applied to Swift for the skits and fugitive papers that he had written during the past four or five years, for insertion in the fourth volume of the "Miscellanies." The dean replied that these were but little accidental things written in the country, family amusements, and strictures on public grievances, which would have no meaning out of Ireland. Pope, however, thought otherwise, and

published the volume, which brought little credit or profit either to himself or his friend.

Swift was talking of another visit to England this year, but his health prevented him carrying out his plans. "I tell you," he wrote to Gay (July 10), "that I fear my Lord Bolingbroke and Mr. Pope, a couple of philosophers, would starve me; for even of port wine I should require half a pint a day, and as much at night: and you were growing as bad, unless the duke and duchess have mended you. You have not forgot, 'Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine'? which was but the remainder of a pint when four glasses were drunk. I tell that story to everybody in commendation of Mr. Pope's abstemiousness. . . . Your colic is owing to intemperance of the philosophical kind. You eat without care, and if you drink less than I you drink too little. But your inattention I cannot pardon, for I thought it lay in your forty millions of schemes by court hopes and court fears. Yet Mr. Pope has the same defect, and it is of all others the most mortal to conversation. Neither is my Lord Bolingbroke untinged with it; all for want of my rule—*Vive la bagatelle!* But the doctor is the king of inattention. What a vexatious life should I lead among you!" [1]

[1] In a letter to Mrs. Cæsar Swift says that Bolingbroke and Pope have pressed him to come to England: "But the former is too much a philosopher; he dines at six in the evening, after studying all the morning till afternoon; and, when he hath dined, to his studies again. Mr. Pope can neither eat nor drink; loves to be alone, and hath always some poetical scheme in his head. Thus the two best friends and companions I ever had, have utterly disqualified themselves for my conversation and my way of living."

It does not appear that Pope went far afield this summer, though he offered to drag his "crazy carcase" to Riskins, if Lord Bathurst would meet him there. He dreads the long journey to Cirencester, and hopes to be happier when he is a separated spirit, and finds at last a "vehicle" active enough to allow of his soul keeping pace with the fiery spirit of Lord Bathurst. He assures his lordship that he is taking pains to arrive at such a vehicle by such methods as would speedily destroy his present crust. Bathurst, secure in a splendid constitution, had little patience with the constant headaches and sickness of his poetical friend, more especially as these were too often the result of an imprudent diet.

"What method you are in to hasten the demolition of that little tenement of yours," he writes on July 20, "which was not designed by nature to bear any proportion of duration with the works of its partner, I am at a loss to guess. You say you are taking pains about it. Believe me, there is no occasion to try any new method. You were sufficiently irregular before, and you need be under no apprehension of exceeding the age of your mother. But, admitting that long life is not so desirable as the generality of mankind reckon, is health to be despised? and, for God's sake, what are you doing to make yours worse than it was? I am provoked at you to the last degree. I positively insist on your coming down to me, that I may put you into a new regimen."

Pope was constantly receiving advice and lectures from well-meaning friends on the subject of his

health, and Bethel, himself an invalid, was one of the most zealous. In an undated letter belonging to this period, Pope tells his Yorkshire friend:

"I shall want you to preach to me for my own good, and keep me (if you can) in that health I'm now endeavouring to lay up. I begin to think of you and your sisters, a warm fireside, two or three friends in a room, a party at quadrille, and no door open at my neck. . . . I never see you but in the worst season—winter, and when I am the worst to be seen; for if I have any life, it is with the butterfly. . . . I am going in haste to plant Jamaica strawberries, which are to be almost as good as pineapples: they say they resemble them in flavour. . . ."[1]

Pope refused a pressing invitation from Caryll on the plea that he was in constant attendance on the last days of his mother, who was now entirely confined to her bed. That he was much tied at home at this period may also be gathered from a letter to his old friend Mrs. Cæsar (November 15), though the state of things herein described is certainly exaggerated.

"Madam,

"I assure you no dean nor lord can think of you more than I do. I have been but thrice in town the whole summer, and as constantly inquired of you by Lord Oxford and Dr. Mead. The former I desired to make our usual party with you and my lady, the little time they were here, and was truly sorry they did not. My poor old woman,

[1] From the unpublished MS.

whom you so kindly ask after, is indeed the cause I seem to forget many of my friends, my attendance being now constantly necessary to her. It is now near two years since I have been able to snatch a day even to dine with Dr. Mead,[1] whom I've sometimes met (as I was in a hurry always) and been ashamed so often to repeat both an excuse and a promise. Your letter, madam, is what I take as a particular mark of kindness, considering how little I must appear to you to deserve it. And I beg you to tell me when you are in town, and where, that I may show you (as I will the first day I can) you can never be forgotten while there is any grace or goodness left in

"Madam,

"Yours, etc.,

"A. Pope."[2]

In the course of the autumn the queen built a hermitage at Richmond, which was to be decorated with the busts of her favourite philosophers. The sensation caused in Court and literary circles by this trivial incident is almost incredible. Pope explains the excitement (in a letter to Gay) by the fact that it was a particularly dead vacation, with no politics at Court, no trade in town, and nothing doing except poetry.

"Every man and every boy is writing verses on the royal hermitage," he reports. "You would oblige my Lady Suffolk if you tried your muse on

[1] The previous summer Pope had spent nearly two months away from home.

[2] From the unpublished MS.

this occasion. I am sure I would do as much for the Duchess of Queensberry if she desired it. Several of your friends assure me it is expected of you. One should not bear in mind all one's life any little indignity one receives from a Court, and therefore I am in hopes neither her grace will hinder you nor you decline it."

This was certainly surprising advice from one who was continually abusing the Court and all connected with it, and advising his friends to despise it as much as he himself did.[1] We have seen how warmly he had approved of Gay's refusal of a "place" that he thought unworthy his deserts. Considering, moreover, that Gay's generous patrons, the Queenberrys, had retired from the Court on his account, he would have been strangely lacking in taste if he had panegyrised the queen while he was still enjoying their protection and hospitality. "Johnny" presumably took this view, for he replied to Pope's suggestion in a tone of most unusual chilliness:

"As to your advice about writing panegyric, it is what I have not frequently done. I have indeed done it sometimes against my judgment and inclination, and I heartily repent of it. And at present, as I have no desire of reward, and see no just reason of praise, I think I had better let it alone. There are flatterers good enough to be

[1] Gay preserved, almost throughout his life, a naive belief in the transcendent delights of a court life. Thus *à propos* of a report of Mrs. Howard's high health and spirits, he observed: "Considering the multiplicity of pleasures and delights that one is overrun with in those places, I wonder how anybody has health and spirits to support them."

found, and I would not interfere in any gentleman's profession."

Gay's health was rapidly failing. He had long suffered from internal troubles, and, after a brief illness, he died on December 4, 1732, aged only 44. His death was a heavy blow to Pope, to whom Gay's cheerful temper and gentle, engaging ways had greatly endeared him. On December 5 Pope sent the sad news to Swift:

"One of the nearest and longest ties I have ever had is broken all on a sudden by the unexpected death of poor Mr. Gay. An inflammatory fever hurried him out of this life in three days. He died last night at nine o'clock, not deprived of his senses entirely at last, and possessing them perfectly till within five hours. He asked of you a few hours before, when in acute torment by the inflammation in his bowels and heart. His effects are in the Duke of Queensberry's custody. His sisters, we suppose, will be his heirs, who are two widows.[1] As yet it is not known whether or no he left a will. Good God! how often are we to die before we go off this stage? . . . I shall never see you now, I believe: one of your principal calls to England is at an end. Indeed he was the most amiable by far, his qualities were the gentlest; but I love you as well and as firmly. Would to God the man we have lost had not been so amiable nor so good; but that is a wish for our own sakes, not for his."

The distress caused to Pope by the loss of one of his dearest friends was aggravated by the severe

[1] Gay left about £6,000.

From a mezzotint engraving by F. Milvus after a painting by W. Aikman.

JOHN GAY.

illness of Martha Blount. It was supposed that the news of Gay's sudden death gave her a shock which brought on a serious indisposition. Arbuthnot, who attended both invalids, was able to pull Patty through, in spite of what Pope considered the callous inconsiderateness of her family. As a matter of fact, her mother and sister seem to have held theories about fresh air and cleanliness which were nearly two hundred years in advance of their age.

"During her whole illness," relates Pope, "during which her recovery depended on her being kept warm, the worthy family set open all their windows and doors, and washed the house and stairs, to her very door, twice in a week; and had a constant clatter of doors and removal of chairs, and all the noise that could possibly be made, while she was ordered to be composed to rest by the doctor. This I saw and heard, and so did Dr. Arbuthnot, who very humorously asked, as he went up and down their stairs, why they did not sell and make money of their sashes, and leave the windows quite open." [1]

[1] The exaggeration is obvious. If the behaviour of her family had really endangered Patty's life, as Pope suggests, a physician of Arbuthnot's character and standing would certainly not have treated the matter humorously.

CHAPTER XLI

1733

The "Epistle to Lord Bathurst"—"The First Imitation of the Second Book of Horace"

THIS year is memorable in the annals of Twickenham for the publication of three important poems. Early in January Pope wrote to tell Caryll that the post would bring him the "Epistle to Lord Bathurst," [1] which was not the worst thing he had written, and abounded in moral examples, for which reason it would certainly be obnoxious to the age.

"I believe," he adds, "you will receive from the care of your poor goddaughter a prettier poem.[2] I call her poor, for she deserves pity, both from the strange, unnatural usage she meets with in her own family, and from her weak but well-natured submission to it."

Taking the Epistle first, we find that, like the other "Moral Essays," it was intended as part of a great comprehensive scheme which was never

[1] Afterwards known as the third "Moral Essay."

[2] This may have been either the "Imitation of Horace" or "The Characters of Women."

destined to be carried out in its entirety. When Pope was preparing the final edition of his "Works" he was persuaded by Warburton to change the Epistle into a Dialogue. Poor Lord Bathurst used to say that he had often read the Epistle with pleasure, but he was surprised to see how little he contributed to the Dialogue, and what a shabby, indifferent figure he made.

"I hope," he told Warton, "I had generally more to say for myself in the many charming conversations I used to hold with Pope, Swift, and my old poetical friends."

According to the Argument, the proper use of riches is known to few, most persons falling into extremes, either of avarice or profusion. The question is discussed, whether the invention of money has been more convenient or more pernicious to men. Examples are given of prodigals, misers, and philanthropists. It is pointed out that money cannot buy happiness, and that the conduct of men with respect to riches can only be accounted for by the order of Providence, which works the general good out of the extremes of vice or virtue. We find here the first statement of Pope's favourite "ruling passion" theory, which was further developed in the "Essay on Man" and the "Epistle to Lord Cobham."

> The ruling passion, be it what it will,
> The ruling passion conquers reason still.

The most scathing satire in the Epistle is directed against the discreditable commercial ventures of the period—the South Sea Bubble, the Charitable

Corporation,[1] the York Buildings Company, and the fraudulent sale of Lord Derwentwater's forfeited estates.[2] Walpole had shown himself averse from holding parliamentary inquiries into the great public frauds, and the Whig party was supposed to encourage the moneyed interest in opposition to the landed interest. Pope, who had been "bit" in the South Sea Bubble, displayed the bitterness of personal feeling in his denunciation of commercial corruption.

The poem opens with an imaginary discussion between Pope and his friend on the good or evil attributes of gold. But, to quote the poet's own words—

> Who shall decide when doctors disagree,
> And soundest casuists doubt, like you and me?

Bathurst points out the very obvious uses of a currency, while Pope retorts with an equally obvious catalogue of the evils it creates, more especially in the form of paper credit—

> Blest paper credit! last and best supply!
> That lends Corruption lighter wings to fly.

In a delightfully humorous passage the satirist looks back longingly to the good old days of barter, and sketches the various difficulties that would arise

[1] In 1730 a corporation was founded under this name to lend money to the poor upon pledges; but the whole was turned only to an iniquitous method of enriching particular people to the ruin of such numbers that it became a parliamentary concern to endeavour the relief of those unhappy sufferers, and three of the managers, who were members of the House, were expelled.

[2] Lord Hervey states that Walpole opposed the Bill for vacating the fraudulent sales of Lord Derwentwater's estate, by which the trustees had cheated the public of an immense sum and acted in flat contradiction to an Act of Parliament.

if it became necessary to bribe with goods instead of with bank-notes.

> A statesman's slumbers how this speech would spoil:
> "Sir, Spain has sent a thousand jars of oil,
> Huge bales of British cloth blockade the door,
> A hundred oxen at your levee roar!"

Pope next inquires what good things money can buy, and, having proved that it cannot purchase health or happiness, reduces its benefits to the bare necessaries of food, clothes, and fire. The corrupt commercial enterprises of the time are next touched upon, enterprises by which great fortunes were fraudulently made or foolishly lost, and instances are given of misers, sharp practitioners, and spendthrifts.

The career of the Man of Ross[1] is quoted as an example of the public good that may be done by a man of moderate fortune.

> Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows?
> Whose seats the weary traveller repose?
> Who taught that heaven-directed spire to rise?
> "The Man of Ross," each lisping babe replies.
> Behold the market-place with poor o'erspread!
> The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread;
> He feeds yon almshouse, neat but void of state,
> Where Age and Want sit smiling at the gate.
> Him portioned maids, apprenticed orphans blessed,
> The young who labour, and the old who rest.

[1] John Kyrle (1637–1724). He was a country gentleman who lived on his estate at Ross, and devoted the whole of his surplus income to works of charity. He kept open house on every market-day, and the remains of the feast were distributed to the poor. He promoted the erection of some waterworks near the Wye, founded an almshouse, and planted a shady walk, about a mile and a half in length, called Kyrle's Walk. The Kyrle Society, inaugurated in 1877, was named after him.

Then comes the revelation that these and other miracles of benevolence were accomplished on an income of five hundred pounds a year.[1] Pope had taken a good deal of trouble to "get up" the facts relating to the Man of Ross, whose story had fired his imagination. Two years before he had written to Jacob Tonson, who lived in the neighbourhood of Ross, to ask exact particulars about John Kyrle. Tonson sent him such information as he could gather, and Pope touched up the details, excusing his exaggeration on the ground that, since the world is bad enough to be always extenuating and lessening the virtue that is among us, it is but reasonable to pay it sometimes a little over-measure to balance that injustice, especially when it is done for example and encouragement to others. "If any man shall ever happen to endeavour to emulate the Man of Ross, it will be no manner of harm if I make him think he was something more charitable and more beneficent than he really was, for so much more good it would put the imitator upon doing." [2]

However warm his admiration for the virtues of the Man of Ross, Pope rises to greater heights of poetry when he deals with the death-bed scene of George Villiers, the famous second Duke

[1] This income, however, was explained to be clear of debts and taxes, as well as wife and children. Johnson says that the Man of Ross was assisted in his good works by rich people who had faith in his integrity and benevolence.

[2] In the same spirit he paints Sir John Cutler as a miser of unrelieved parsimony. Cutler was a well-known alderman of London who was scarcely less renowned for his public munificence than for his private frugality; but, as Sir John was to serve as a warning, Pope thought himself justified in ignoring the worthy man's generosity.

of Buckingham, whose fate is chosen as an example of the blessings that wealth can give to life, and the doubtful comforts that it affords our end :

> In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half hung,
> The floors of plaster and the walls of dung,
> On once a flock-bed, but repaired with straw,
> With tape-tied curtains never meant to draw,
> The George and Garter dangling from that bed
> Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
> Great Villiers lies [1]—alas! how changed from him,
> That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim!
> Gallant and gay in Cliveden's proud alcove,
> The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love; [2]
> Or just as gay, at council, in a ring
> Of mimic statesmen and their merry king.
> No wit to flatter left of all his store!
> No fool to laugh at, which he valued more.
> There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
> And fame, this lord of useless thousands ends.

The Epistle ends with the brilliantly told story of the rise and fall of Sir John Balaam, a respectable, sober, honest citizen, who lived the plain frugal life of his class—

> One solid dish his week-day meal affords,
> An added pudding solemnised the Lord's.

The devil determined to tempt him, not like Job, with misfortune, but with good luck, leading to great riches. Sir Balaam has land on the Cornish coast, and the Prince of Darkness raises a whirlwind with the result that—

> Two rich shipwrecks bless the lucky shore.

[1] The Duke of Buckingham did not die in an inn, but in the house of one of his tenants at Kirby Moorside, in 1687.

[2] Cliveden was built by the Duke of Buckingham. In 1667 he killed the Earl of Shrewsbury in a duel.

With this increase of fortune—

> Sir Balaam now, he lives like other folks,
> He takes his chirping pint, and cracks his jokes;
> "Live like yourself," was soon my lady's word;
> And lo! two puddings smoked upon the board.

But Satan is not content with this specimen of middle-class extravagance, and a second stroke of fortune follows quickly on the heels of the first.

> Asleep and naked as an Indian lay,
> An honest factor stole a gem away.
> He pledged it to the knight; the knight had wit,
> So kept the diamond, and the rogue was bit.
> Some scruple rose, but thus he eased his thought:
> "I'll now give sixpence where I gave a groat;
> Where once I went to church, I'll now go twice—
> And am so clear, too, of all other vice!"

Sir Balaam becomes director of a company, and, being now a widower, takes to wife a nymph of quality. He buys his son a commission in a crack regiment, marries his daughter to a dissipated viscount, and goes into Parliament. His young wife takes to high play, his son is extravagant, and he is tempted to accept a bribe from France. He is impeached by the House, forsaken by the Court, and ends on the scaffold.

> Wife, son, and daughter, Satan, are thy own,
> His wealth, yet dearer, forfeit to the Crown:
> The devil and the king divide the prize,
> And sad Sir Balaam curses God and dies.

Considerably to the poet's own surprise, the Epistle was received by the public with enthusiasm. "This last sermon has had some good effect," he

tells Caryll on January 31, and yet "the preacher has been railed at less than usually those are who will be declaiming against popular or national vices. I shall redouble my blows very speedily." The reason for the absence of anger or resentment may probably be found in the fact that no living person had been satirised whom the public held in respect or esteem. The Duke of Buckingham and Cutler, the miser, had long been dead, while Sir Balaam, Cotta, and Curio were not identified with real characters. Nobody objected to satires on Sir John Blount, one of the South Sea directors, or Sir Robert Sutton and Denis Bond, who were implicated in the Charitable Corporation frauds. The poet's personal enemies, the Wortley Montagus, came in for one or two cuts, but they were not public characters, and it is probable that only their own acquaintances guessed who was meant by "Worldly" or by "Sappho."

Swift probably gave utterance to the feeling of the general public when he wrote to Pope: "Your poem on the use of riches has been just printed here, and we have no objection but the obscurity of several passages by our ignorance in facts and persons, which makes us lose abundance of the satire. Had the printer given me notice, I would have honestly printed the names at length, where I happened to know them, and writ explanatory notes, which, however, would have been but few, for my long absence has made me ignorant of what passes out of the scene where I am."

Pope wrote the epitaph on Gay about this time, which he sent to Swift, who declared that he had

never seen in so few lines more good sense or good feeling.[1] *À propos* of Gay's premature death, Pope told his friend that he had thought much on mortality of late, and also of collecting the best monuments of his friends—their own images in their own writings. He was preparing also for his own death, and desired before all things to show the silly world that men of wit, or even poets, may be the most moral of mankind. A few loose things might sometimes fall from them which might bring upon them the censure of fools, but when such trifling *jeux d'esprit* had once got abroad, all that prudence or repentance could do, was to acknowledge them fairly as such, and teach the public, as in the four volumes of "Miscellanies," to distinguish between their studies and their idlenesses, their work and their weaknesses.[2]

"It went to my heart," he says, "to omit what you call the libel on Dr. Delany and the best panegyric

[1] The epitaph is as follows:

Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit a man; simplicity a child;
With native humour temp'ring virtuous rage,
Formed to delight at once and lash the age;
Above temptation in a low estate,
And uncorrupted, ev'n among the great;
A safe companion and an easy friend,
Unblamed through life, lamented in thy end,—
These are thy honours! not that here thy bust
Is mixed with heroes, or with kings thy dust;
But that the worthy and the good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms—*Here* lies GAY.

[2] The Preface to the first three volumes stated that this collection contained every piece which the authors, in their idlest humour, had ever written. The third volume was styled the last volume. When yet another volume was published, in 1732, it was called the third volume.

on myself that either my own times or any other could have afforded me, or ever will afford to me."[1]

The most morbidly vain of men would probably have been satisfied with the panegyric, which runs as follows :

> Hail, happy Pope! whose generous mind
> Detesting all the statesmen kind,
> Contemning courts, at courts unseen,
> Refused the visits of a queen.
> A soul with every virtue fraught,
> By sages, priests, or poets taught;
> Whose filial piety excels
> Whatever Grecian story tells;
> A genius for all stations fit,
> Whose meanest talent is his wit:
> His heart too great, though fortune little,
> To lick a rascal statesman's spittle;
> Appealing to the nation's taste,
> Above the reach of want is placed;
> By Homer dead was taught to thrive,
> Which Homer never could alive,
> And sits aloft on Pindus' head,
> Despising slaves that cringe for bread.

The "Epistle to Lord Bathurst" was followed in a few weeks by the "Imitation of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace," addressed to Pope's legal friend and adviser, William Fortescue. This work was suggested by Bolingbroke, who, calling on Pope one day when he was just recovering from a fever, took up a "Horace" that was lying on the table, and remarked that this particular satire was

[1] In a later letter to Swift Pope says: "I am glad you persist and abide by so good a thing as that poem, in which I am immortal for my morality. I never took any praise so kindly, and yet I think I deserve that praise better than any other."

applicable to the poet's own case. Struck by the idea, Pope translated the poem in a couple of mornings, and sent it to the press in less than a week. He told Swift that he had never taken more pains with anything than with the "Epistle to Lord Bathurst," or less with anything than with this "Imitation of Horace." It has been aptly said that Pope was never so truly original as in his Imitations, and it is evident that the satire was as easy to write as it is to read.

In a letter to Fortescue, Pope asks :

"Have you seen my 'Imitation of Horace'? I fancy it will make you smile; but though, when I first began it, I thought of you, before I came to end it I considered it might be too ludicrous, to a man in your situation, to make you Trebatius, who was yet one of the most considerable lawyers of his own time, and a particular friend of the poet."

The dialogue opens with a complaint by the poet of the resentment which his former satires have aroused in the popular mind. He applies to his friend for advice—of course, without a fee. The learned counsel briefly suggests that he should write no more. "Not write!" cries the poet.

> But then I think,
> And, for my soul, I cannot sleep a wink;
> I nod in company, I wake at night,
> Fools rush into my head, and so I write.

The worst thing he could do, according to Fortescue; but if he must write, he should compose something in praise of Cæsar, as then he might

gain a knighthood or the bays. The satirist replies:

What! like Sir Richard,[1] rumbling, rough, and fierce,
With *ARMS* and *GEORGE* and *BRUNSWICK* crowd the verse;
Rend with tremendous sound your ears asunder,
With guns, drums, trumpets, blunderbuss, and thunder?

Besides, it was useless to write in praise of the royal family, since—

Few verses touch their finer ear,
They scarce can bear their Laureate twice a year.[2]

The poet, who professes to love nothing so well as plain speaking, proposes to publish the present age in an impartial glass, and to expose himself, his foes, and his friends.[3]

My head and heart thus flowing through my quill,
Verse-man or prose-man, term me what you will,[4]
Papist or Protestant, or both between,
Like good Erasmus, in an honest mean,
In moderation placing all my glory,
While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory.

Though satire is his weapon, he is too discreet to run a-muck and tilt at all he meets.

Peace is my dear delight—not Fleury's more:
But touch me, and no minister so sore.

[1] Blackmore.

[2] Colley Cibber was now Poet Laureate.

[3] Mrs. Pendarves, writing to her sister in February 1733, says: "Mr. Pope, I find, has undertaken to lash the age; I believe he will be tired before they are reformed. He says he *will spare neither friend nor foe*, so that declaring oneself for him will not secure us from a stroke."

[4] Lord Bathurst used to call Prior his verse-man and Lewis his prose-man.

Whoe'er offends, at some unlucky time
Slides into verse, and hitches in a rhyme;
Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,
And the sad burden of some merry song.

Whatever the consequences of his temerity, the slander or poison of Delia,[1] the hard words or hanging of Judge Page,[2] the hate of "Sappho," or the neglect of the Court:

In durance, exile, Bedlam or the Mint,
Like Lee or Budgell,[3] I will rhyme or print.
F. Alas, young man, your days can ne'er be long!
In flower of age you perish for a song!

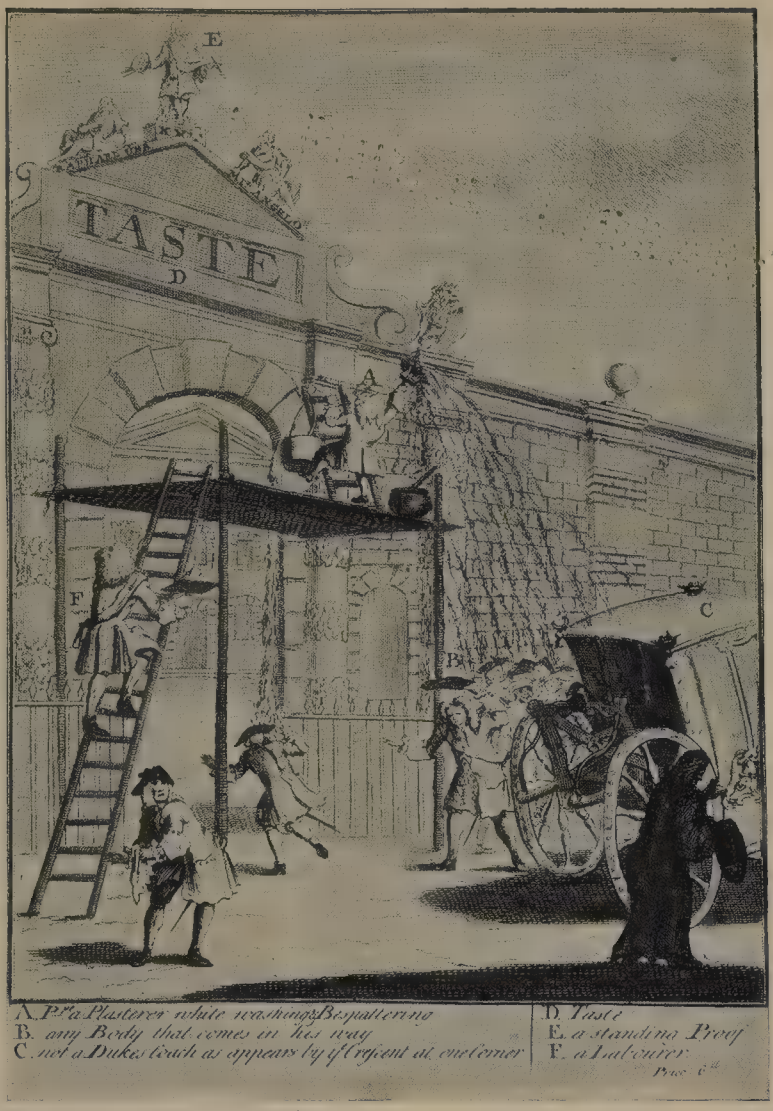
The satirist retorts with a passage of splendid rhetoric, in which he fairly outshines his model:

What! armed for Virtue when I point the pen,
Brand the bold front of shameless, guilty men;
Dash the proud gamester in his gilded car;
Bare the mean heart that lurks beneath a star;
Can there be wanting, to defend her cause,
Lights of the Church, or guardians of the laws?
Could pensioned Boileau lash, in honest strain,
Flatterers and bigots, even in Louis' reign?
Could laureate Dryden pimp and friar engage,
Yet neither Charles nor James be in a rage?

[1] Delia was supposed to be the widow of the first Lord Deloraine. She afterwards married William Wyndham, and became the mistress of George II. There was a rumour that she had administered poison to one of the maids-of-honour, a Miss Mackenzie.

[2] Sir Francis Page. In 1728 he had presided at the trial of Pope's *protégé*, Richard Savage, for the murder of Mr. Sinclair, and had sentenced the culprit to death. He was known by the name of "The hanging Judge."

[3] Nathaniel Lee, the dramatist (*c.* 1653–92). He went out of his mind in 1684, and was confined in Bedlam till 1689. His best-known play was *The Rival Queens*. Budgell, though never actually under restraint, was accused of "disordered intellects."



From an engraving after W. Hogarth.

TASTE, THE GATE OF BURLINGTON HOUSE.

And I not strip the gilding off a knave,
Unplaced, unpensioned, no man's heir or slave?
I will, or perish in the generous cause.
Hear this and tremble! you who 'scape the laws.
Yes, while I live, no rich or noble knave
Shall walk the world, in credit, to his grave.
To Virtue only, and her friends, a friend,
The world beside may murmur, or commend.
Know, all the distant din that world can keep,
Rolls o'er my grotto, and but soothes my sleep.
There my retreat the best companions grace,
Chiefs out of war and statesmen out of place.
There St. John mingles with my friendly bowl
The feast of reason and the flow of soul.
And he whose lightning pierced the Iberian lines[1]
Now forms my quincunx, and now ranks my vines,
Or tames the genius of the stubborn plain
Almost as quickly as he conquered Spain.
Envy must own I live among the great,
No pimp of pleasure, and no spy of state;
With eyes that pry not, tongue that ne'er repeats,
Fond to spread friendships, but to cover heats;
To help who want, to forward who excel—
This all who know me, know; who love me, tell.
And who unknown defame me, let them be
Scribblers or peers, alike are mob to me.

[1] Lord Peterborough.

CHAPTER XLII

1733

The Reception of the "Imitation of Horace"—Swift's Literary Ladies—Mrs. Barber—Counter-attacks by Lady M. W. Montagu and Lord Hervey—"Verses to the Imitator of Horace" and "Letter from a Nobleman"

THE Imitation created an even greater sensation in town than the Moral Epistles, enchanting the poet's admirers, but striking awe into the hearts of his enemies and detractors. Whatever a man's character, if he had offended the bard of Twickenham he was pretty certain to be branded as a knave or fool, and "damned to everlasting fame." From the unpublished letters in the Cæsar Correspondence we gain some idea of the adoration with which Pope, now at the height of his reputation, was regarded by his own intimates, and the effect which his satire produced on contemporary readers.

Early in this year Mrs. Madan, *née* Judith Cowper, wrote to Mrs. Cæsar to express her pleasure at being remembered after a long absence. Pope had apparently inquired whether she was alive or dead, for she continues:

"At the same time I own it to be a sensible

mortification to be forgotten by Mr. Pope, for so I must interpret his not knowing if such a one lives. I am, however, just to the valuable friendship he once expressed for me, and shall to the last moment of my life preserve the most grateful idea of it. He contributes to enliven my retirement and 'tis to reading him I owe that I have taste enough to be pleased with the verses you sent me. . . ." [1]

Young Lord Orrery,[2] who prided himself upon his pronounced literary tastes, was a friend and correspondent of Mrs. Cæsar's, but he had not yet made the acquaintance of Mr. Pope. On February 24 of this year he wrote from Ireland :

"In one of your letters, madam, you mentioned Mr. Pope. I cannot but envy your happiness in having a friendship with the finest genius of our age, and I must own that, among the various misfortunes of my life, the want of being better known to him I reckon one of the greatest. To make some amends, therefore, for the want of a personal conversation, I am daily improving my acquaintance with his works, and when I can once venture to say I have gained an intimacy with them I shall begin to think you will really be pleased to find me what I now am,

"Yours, etc."

[1] From the unpublished MS. The verses were probably the "Imitation of Horace." Mrs. Cæsar was sending copies round to her friends.

[2] John, fifth Earl of Orrery and son of Charles Boyle, fourth Earl, who was the antagonist of Bentley. He desired to pose as a man of letters, and was ambitious of the friendship of writers. He wrote some "Remarks" on Swift and translated the "Letters" of Pliny.

Swift had a bad habit of giving his Dublin literary *protégées*, and even his friends' *protégées*, introductions to his London acquaintances. He was easily impressed by a very modest display of female learning, while intelligently applied flattery was a sure method of gaining his interest and help. Two or three years before the present date he had sent Pope some account of three learned ladies of Dublin. First, there was Mrs. Grierson, a young woman, still in the twenties, who is described as a very good Latin and Greek scholar.[1] She had lately published a fine edition of Tacitus, with a Latin dedication to the Lord-Lieutenant. Then there was Mrs. Barber, wife of a woollen-draper, who was Dublin's chief poetess, and "upon the whole, has no ill genius."[2] Lastly, there was Mrs. Sykins, who had a very good taste in poetry, had read much, and written one or two things with applause. The three ladies were all friends and favourites of Dr. Delany, and at his desire Swift gave two out of the three introductions to people in London. First came Mrs. Sykins, with a passport from Swift to have the honour and happiness of seeing Pope, "because she has already seen the estrich [*sic*], which is the only rarity at present in this town, and her ambition is to boast of having been well received by you upon her return; and I

[1] She was the wife of a Scotch bookseller, George Grierson, who was George II.'s printer in Ireland. Though the daughter of poor peasants, she is said to have been well read in history, divinity, philosophy, and mathematics! She died in 1733, aged only twenty-seven.

[2] Mary Barber (*c.* 1690–1757). She published "Poems on Several Occasions" in 1734. Later, she and her husband settled at Bath, where they started a lodging-house.

do not see how you can well refuse to gratify her, for if a Christian will be an estrich, and the only estrich in the kingdom, he must suffer himself to be seen, and, what is worse, without money."

Mrs. Sykins did not succeed in seeing Pope, though he was willing to be seen.[1] She was followed by Mrs. Barber, the poetess, to whom Swift said that he should give no recommendations, at any rate, to Twickenham. But by the time she arrived in town to solicit subscriptions to a volume of her poems the dean had forgotton his prudent resolutions, for she came armed with excellent introductions. She actually had the temerity to request Pope to "correct" her verses, but this he declined to do, though he promised to try and get his friends to subscribe for her book. Mrs. Barber had not long been in London before the queen received two letters about her, one purporting to come from Swift, and signed with his name, though the contents were not in his handwriting. In this counterfeit letter the queen's patronage was solicited for Mrs. Barber, who was represented as "the best female poet of this or perhaps of any age—a woman whose genius is honoured by every man of genius in this kingdom, and honoured or envied by every man of genius in England."

The letter was returned to Swift by Pope, who obtained it from Lady Suffolk. Swift explained that Mrs. Barber was almost a stranger to him, and

[1] She came to Twickenham one wet evening, and sent in her letter to Pope. He wrote that he would be at home all the next day at her service, and offered to send a chariot for her. But the next morning she returned to London, without having seen the "estrich."

that he had only befriended her at the earnest request of Dr. Delany. The mystery of the letter was never cleared up (there was a second which was anonymous), but both the dean and Dr. Delany must have been convinced that Mrs. Barber was not in fault, since they continued on friendly terms with her, and she was received at the deanery after her return to Dublin.

Mrs. Barber had been given an introduction to the Cæsars, who had made her welcome at their house in Bond Street. The dean wrote to thank Mrs. Cæsar for her kindness to the poetess, and regretted that he could not repay the obligation, "for, in spite of your good words, I am the most insignificant man of this insignificant country." He has been tied by the leg (without being married) for ten months with a strain, which prevented him from waiting upon her during the past summer, "and another year, at my period of life, is like an inch in a man's nose.

"There is one part of Mr. Pope's compliment which I cannot make you, for I could not, with the strictest search, find one letter too many in any of your words, though I found a thousand words too few in your letter. . . . I have been told that you are a great courtier—at least, of the queen's—for which I envy you much, because I am wholly out of her favour, and under her displeasure, which you may believe is a great mortification to me who expected so many great advantages from her. . . ."

Mrs. Cæsar sent Mrs. Barber, who was now back at Dublin, a copy of the "Imitation of Horace," and received a letter full of gratitude and enthusiasm from the literary lady, who was an appreciative reader if she was not a brilliant writer. The letter is worth

quoting, if only because it shows the effect of Pope's satire upon an intelligent contemporary.

"A thousand thanks to you, dear madam, for your valuable, delightful present. I had the same pacquet from Mr. Cleland which I sent to Lord Orrery, and have had great acknowledgments from it. I find he is as much transported with it as I am, who have scratched my head-clothes off a hundred times since I received it, and often fancied I heard you say: 'See, Mr. Cæsar, the creature is running mad.' You can't imagine, my dear Mrs. Cæsar, what a loss I had of my feet on this occasion, to walk about the room as I used to do in Bond Street. . . .

"What says the Court to the satyr? 'Tis said that one Aretina, a satyrist, kept all the princes in Europe in awe. In my conscience, he took the right method with them.

> "And I not strip the gilding off a knave,
> Unplaced, unpensioned, no man's heir or slave?

"O happy situation! O glorious genius!

> "Alas! few verses touch their nicer ear,
> They scarce can bear their Laureate twice a year.

"Was there ever genteeler satyr or more just? It came in good time, too, when her majesty's ear must have been tired. At least my eyes were with reading the poems with which every newspaper was stuffed, upon putting up the *Four Heads*.[1]

> "What! like Sir Richard, rumbling, loud, and fierce,
> With *ARMS* and *GEORGE* and *BRUNSWICK* crowd the verse?

[1] The heads of the Queen's favourite philosophers in the Hermitage at Richmond.

"Now though I don't know any business these lines had here, I could not for my life but write 'em down, I am so delighted with 'em, not considering that if I were to write down every line that gives me exquisite pleasure in that poem, my paper would be too little. Was it not a glorious spirit to point out 'Shippen,'[1] and dare to compliment 'Bolling Brook' [*sic*]?

> "Or tames the genius of the stubborn plain
> Almost as quickly as he conquered Spain.

O fine! But there are four lines—beautiful admirable lines, which my melancholy situation often brings to my view:

> "Whether old age, with faint but cheerful ray
> Attends to gild the evening of my day,
> Or death's black wing already is displayed
> To wrap me in the universal shade.

"Now I've grown grave. . . . I have been honoured with a visit from the dean since I finished the letter. We talked over the Satyr, with which he is highly delighted as well as you. 'Tis indeed universally admired here. . . . The dean is much pleased with "The Man of Taste,"[2] and said it has made him laugh more than he has done in one day

[1] I love to pour out all myself as plain
As downright Shippen, or as old Montaigne.

William Shippen (1673-1743), an honest Jacobite who was sent to the Tower for saying (in 1718) that "the king's speech seemed rather to be calculated for the meridian of Germany than Great Britain," and that "'twas a great misfortune that the king was a stranger to our language and constitution."

[2] There was a satire against Pope called "The Man of Taste," but Mrs. Barber is probably alluding to the description of Timon in the "Epistle to Lord Bathurst."

for some years past. That poem has been of great service to me too, who had almost forgot to laugh, having daily before my eyes the melancholy prospect of being ever confined." [1]

One more extract from a letter of Mrs. Barber's, with a pen-sketch of a dinner at the deanery, in the company of a coterie of Pope adorers.

"I would not defer telling you," she writes on May 3, "I dined yesterday at the deanery, and supped too; then you'll believe I was happy. The dean (thank Heaven!) is in good spirits. I told him I had just received a letter from Twickenham which informed me that Mr. Pope was making an addition to his apartment there,[2] and, as the lady said, expected him over this summer. . . . Now, madam, I must tell you that just as we were sitting down to dinner at the dean's, Lord Orrery sent him some lines to Mr. Pope with which the company (for there were a good many there) were highly delighted, and the dean seemed to me to be excessively pleased. As for me, my head-clothes were almost off in a minute. So I send them [3] to you that you may share in my pleasure.

"The dean said a thousand handsome things of Lord Orrery, to the great joy of my heart. That young nobleman rises in *his esteem* every day. To say the truth, one is perpetually hearing of some handsome action or other of his—'tis no wonder he should be gazed at with admiration. Such stars are seldom seen here.

"The dean, who had just finished a letter to

[1] From the unpublished MS. [2] He was building a portico.
[3] The lines, not the head-clothes.

Mr. Pope, said he believed he had left room enough for the verses, which he immediately transcribed and sent to him." [1]

Among the few persons who did not join in the general admiration for the "Imitation of Horace" were Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Lord Hervey. The former recognised herself under the name of "Sappho," and the latter was convinced that "Lord Fanny" was intended for himself. The exact truth about the quarrel between Lady Mary and Pope will probably never be known. According to the lady's account, the poet made her a "declaration," which she received with an uncontrollable burst of laughter. Pope's "declaration" was probably no more genuine than his love-letters, and he would have been much alarmed if he had been taken *au grand sérieux*. All he had desired was that his partner in the game of gallantry should "play up to him," and, by reprimands or reproaches, appear to take him for "the most thinking rake alive." But the lady's tactless reception of his homage wounded him in his tenderest point, and transformed him from a friend and admirer to an untiring enemy. Pope himself said that he discon-

[1] From the unpublished MS. These were, no doubt, the following lines composed by Orrery in 1733, on Pope's "Epitaph on Gay."

> Entombed with kings though Gay's cold ashes lie,
> A nobler monument thy strains supply :
> Thy matchless Muse, still faithful to thy friend,
> By courts unawed, his virtues dares commend.
> Lamented Gay, forget thy treatment past,
> Look down, and see thy merit crowned at last !
> A destiny more glorious who can hope,
> In life beloved, in death bemoaned by Pope ?

tinued the society of Lord Hervey and Lady Mary "because they had too much wit for him." On another occasion he said that the pair had pressed him to write a satire on certain persons, and that his refusal had led to the rupture.

The first shot, as already stated, had been fired by Pope in "The Capon's Tale," published in the "Miscellany" of 1727. This is addressed to a lady who fastened her lampoons on her acquaintance, and tells of a Yorkshire farmer's wife who had a hen—

> With eyes so piercing, yet so pleasant,
> You would have sworn this hen a pheasant.

The bird having hatched more chicks than she could rear, the good wife made a capon drunk and clapped the brood under his wings. The tale concludes with the lines :

> Such, Lady Mary, are your tricks ;
> But since you hatch, pray own your chicks.[1]

The next year appeared the couplet in "The Dunciad" about "hapless Monsieur," who much complained at Paris "Of wrongs from duchesses and Lady Maries," and in the edition of 1729 the explanatory note was added. Lady Mary did not retaliate at once, though Pope accused her of being the author of one or more of the lampoons that were published against him. In October, 1730, she wrote the following letter to Dr. Arbuthnot, in which she positively denied the authorship of a

[1] An allusion to the fact that many of the satirical ballads and skits of the day were attributed, often falsely, to Lady Mary. In one of her letters she complains that a lampoon by the Duke of Wharton has been fastened upon her.

skit, probably the "One Epistle," that had been attributed to her:

"I am told Pope has the surprising impudence to assert that he can bring the lampoon when he chooses to produce it, under my own hand; I desire he may be made to keep this offer. If he is so skilful in counterfeiting hands I suppose he will not confine that great talent to the gratifying of his malice, but take some occasion to increase his fortune by the same method, and I may hope (by such practices) to see him exalted according to his merits, which nobody will rejoice at more than myself. I beg of you, sir (as an act of justice), to endeavour to set the truth in an open light, and then I leave to your judgment the character of those who have attempted to hurt mine in so barbarous a fashion. I can assure you (in particular) you named a lady to me (as abused in this libel) whose name I never heard before,[1] and as I never had any acquaintance with Dr. Swift, am an utter stranger to his affairs, and even his person, which I never saw to my knowledge, I am now convinced the whole is a contrivance of Pope's to blast the reputation of one who never injured him. I am not more sensible of his injustice than I am, sir, of the candour, generosity and good sense I have found in you, which has obliged me to be, with a very uncommon warmth, your real friend."

In the "Epistle to Lord Bathurst" there had been a couple of digs at Wortley Montagu in the lines *à propos* of a system of payment by barter:

[1] Esther Vanhomrigh.

Astride his cheese Sir Morgan might we meet,
And Worldly crying coals from street to street,[1]
Whom with a wig so wild and mien so mazed,
Pity mistakes for some poor tradesman crazed.

In another passage the friendship between Lady Mary and Miss Molly Skerrett (Sir Robert Walpole's mistress and afterwards his second wife) and their supposed morals are commemorated.

Ask you why Phryne the whole auction buys?
Phryne foresees a general excise.
Why she and Phryne raise that monstrous sum?
Alas! they fear a man will cost a plum.

In the "Imitation of Horace" came an unprintable insult to "Sappho," while her friend Lord Hervey was aggrieved by the comparatively harmless couplet:

"The lines are weak," another's pleased to say,
"Lord Fanny spins a thousand such a day."

Such attacks could no longer be born in silence. The peer and the lady put their heads together, and quickly concocted a satire on the satirist, which appeared in March 1733, under the title of "Verses addressed to the Imitator of Horace. By a Lady." It is believed that the design and the greater part of the composition were the work of Lady Mary, whilst the versification may be attributed to Lord Hervey.[2] The authors lead off with a sneer at Pope's rendering of Horace:

Thine is just such an image of his pen
As thou thyself art of the sons of men,

[1] The Wortley Montagus possessed large coal-mines in the North.

[2] Some assistance is said to have been given by Mr. William Wyndham, who married Lady Deloraine.

Where our own species in burlesque we trace,
A sign-post likeness of the human race,
That is at once resemblance and disgrace.
Horace can laugh, is delicate, is clear;
You only coarsely rail or darkly sneer.
His style is elegant, his diction pure,
Whilst none thy crabbèd numbers can endure,
Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure.

After an allusion to the satire on Canons, and a suggestion that Pope has owed his immunity so far to his dulness, the authors proceed :

Then, whilst with coward hand you stab a name,
And try at least to assassinate our fame,
Like the first bold assassin's be thy lot—
Ne'er be thy guilt forgiven or forgot;
But as thou hat'st, be hated by mankind,
And with the emblem of thy crooked mind
Marked on thy back, like Cain, by God's own hand,
Wander like him, accursèd through the land.

If the taste of these lines is unpardonable, so also was that displayed in the attacks upon "Sappho." Inferior as was the literary style of his opponents, Pope was deeply wounded by the insults to his birth and figure, and he actually appealed for protection to Sir Robert Walpole, whom he had himself satirised, and who was contemptuously indifferent to personal attacks. In a letter to Fortescue, dated March 13, Pope says :

"You may be certain I shall never reply to such a libel as Lady Mary's. It is a pleasure and comfort at once to find that with so much mind as so much malice must have to accuse or blacken my character, it can fix on no one ill or immoral thing in my life, and must content itself to say my poetry is dull and

my figure ugly. I wish you would take an opportunity to represent to the person [Sir R. Walpole] who spoke to you about that lady, that her conduct in no way deserves encouragement from him, or any other great persons; and that the good name of a subject ought to be sacred, even to the highest, as his behaviour towards them is irreproachable, legal, and respectful."

Again, from an undated letter to the same friend, we find that Pope had made a personal complaint to the minister.

"I have seen Sir R. W. but once since you left," he writes. "I made him then my confidant in a complaint against a certain lady of his, and once of my, acquaintance, who is libelling me, as she certainly will one day him, if she has not already. You will easily guess I am speaking of Lady Mary. I should be sorry if she had any credit or influence with him, for she would infallibly use it to belie me; though my only fault towards her was leaving off her conversation when I found it dangerous."

Pope was anxious to know Swift's opinion of Lady Mary's and Lord Hervey's performance. "They are certainly the top wits of the Court," he observes, "and you may judge by that single piece what can be done against me; for it was laboured, corrected, pre-commended, and post-disapproved, so far as to be disowned by themselves, after each had highly cried it up as the other's. I have met with some complaints, and heard at a distance of some threats occasioned by my verses. I sent fair messages to acquaint them where I was to be found in town, and

to offer to call at their houses to satisfy them; and so it dropped."

"Whether the production you mention came from the lady or the lord," replied Swift, "I did not imagine that they were at least such bad versifiers. Therefore, *facit indignatio versus* is only to be applied when the indignation is against general villainy, and never operates when some sort of people write to defend themselves. I love to hear them reproach you for dulness; only I would be satisfied, since you were so dull, why are they so angry? Give me a shilling, and I will ensure you that posterity shall never know you had one single enemy, excepting those whose memory you have preserved."

Lord Hervey was not content with his half-share in the "Verses to the Imitator of Horace." Later in the year he opened battle again on his own account with his "Letter from a Nobleman at Hampton Court to a Doctor of Divinity." The Doctor was Dr. Sherwin, who had addressed a Latin letter to his lordship. Hervey begins by an apology for the ignorance of himself and men of his class, who had forgotten nearly all they learnt at school. In the course of a diatribe on false wit, he observes:

> Guiltless of thought, each blockhead may compose
> This nothing-meaning verse as fast as prose.
> And Pope with justice of such lines may say,
> "His lordship spins a thousand such a day."
> Such Pope himself might write, who ne'er could think;
> He who at crambo plays with pen and ink,
> And is called poet 'cause in rhyme he wrote
> What Dacier construed and what Horace thought.

After remarking that Pope has no more claim to

be called a poet than a dictionary has to be called a wit, and that whenever he wants to write he is forced, like a schoolboy, to go and "beg a little sense," the noble author continues :

> But had he not, to his eternal shame,
> By trying to deserve a sat'rist's name,
> Proved he can ne'er invent but to defame ?
> Had not his "Taste" and "Riches" lately shown,
> When he would talk of genius to the town,
> How ill he chooses if he trust his own ?
> Had he in modern language only wrote
> Those rules which Horace or which Vida taught,
> On Garth's or Boileau's model built his fame,
> Or sold Broome's labours printed with Pope's name ;
> Had he ne'er aimed at any work beside,
> In glory then he might have lived and died ;
> And ever been, though not by genius fired,
> By *schoolboys* quoted, and by *girls* admired.

Pope wrote a prose reply to this satire called "A Letter to a Noble Lord," which was not printed in his lifetime, though he advertised in the newspapers that such a reply would be published, if the Noble Lord did not, in a week, deny the original letter to be his, or contradict the aspersions therein contained. Lord Hervey did not deny or retract, but Pope told Swift : "There is a woman's war declared against me by a certain Lord. His weapons are the same which women and children use : a pin to scratch and a squirt to bespatter. I writ a sort of answer, but was ashamed to enter the lists with him, and, after showing it some people, suppressed it ; otherwise, it was such as was worthy of him and worthy of me."

The Epistle may have been worthy of Lord

Hervey, but, though it has found admirers, it is not worthy of Pope. There are, however, one or two smart hits in it, notably where he says :

"I never heard of the least displeasure you had conceived against me till I was told that an imitation I had made of Horace had offended some persons, and among them your lordship. I could not have apprehended that a few general strokes about a lord scribbling carelessly, a pimp, or a spy at Court, a sharper in a gilded chariot, etc.,—that any of these, I say, should ever be applied as they have been by any malice, but that which is the greatest in the world—the malice of ill people themselves."

The lines on "Sappho," again, he declares that he meant only of such modern Sapphos as imitate more the lewdness than the genius of the ancient one, and he points out how impossible it was that he should have intended them for the lady who had taken them to herself. The insult to his person evidently stuck in his throat, for he observes : "It is true, my lord, I am short, not well-shaped, generally ill-dressed, if not sometimes dirty. Your lordship and your ladyship are still in bloom, your figures such as rival the Apollo of Belvedere and the Venus of Medici, and your faces so finished that neither sickness nor passion can deprive them of colour."

CHAPTER XLIII

1733

The "Essay on Man"

THE first part of the "Essay on Man" was published anonymously in February, 1733. By this time Pope had become quite a past-master in the art of advertising his works by tortuous methods. In a prefatory note to the first edition he suggests, at the same time that he deprecates, the idea of rivalry between the unknown poet and himself. Thus, he observes that, as the author imitates no man, so he would not be thought to vie with any man in these Epistles, least of all with the author of two lately published. Pope's many enemies, we may suppose, eagerly seized upon the work in the hope of discovering a new genius who might eclipse the bard of Twickenham.

As we have seen, Pope had been at work upon the "Essay" during the past two or three years. On August 2, 1731, Bolingbroke had asked, in a letter to Swift :

"Does Pope talk to you of the noble work which, at my instigation, he has begun in such a manner that he must be convinced by this time I judged

better of his talents than he did? The first epistle, which considers man and the habitation of man, relatively to the whole system of universal being; the second, which considers him in his own habitation, in himself, and relatively to his particular system; and the third which shows how—

> A universal Cause
> Works to one end, and works by various laws— [1]

how man and beast and vegetable are linked in a mutual dependency, parts necessary to each other, and necessary to the whole; how human societies were formed and derived; how God has made our greatest interest and our plainest duty indivisibly the same,—these three epistles, I say, are finished. The fourth he is now intent upon. It is a noble subject. He pleads the cause of God (I use Seneca's expression) against that famous charge which atheists in all ages have brought against the supposed unequal dispensation of Providence—a charge which I cannot heartily forgive your divines for admitting. You admit it indeed, for an extreme good purpose, and you build on this admission the necessity of a future state of rewards and punishments."

Pope's original design had been conceived on a vast scale. The "Essay on Man," as we know it, was intended to be to the whole work what a scale is to a book of maps. The second book was to treat of Knowledge and its limits, the third of Government, civil and ecclesiastical, and the fourth of Morality in eight or nine of its branches. For-

[1] In the "Essay on Man" the lines run:

> A universal Cause
> Acts to one end, but acts by various laws.

tunately, this comprehensive scheme was abandoned, only the "Essay on Man" and the "Moral Essays" remaining out of the wreckage.

According to Spence, Lord Bathurst declared that the "Essay on Man" "was originally composed by Lord Bolingbroke in prose, and that Mr. Pope did no more than put it in verse"; that he (Bathurst) had read Lord Bolingbroke's manuscript, and remembered well that he was at a loss whether most to admire the elegance of Bolingbroke's prose or the beauty of Mr. Pope's verse. This was no doubt an exaggeration, though Pope himself admitted to Spence that he was much indebted to Lord Bolingbroke for the thoughts and reasonings in his moral work, and confessed that he had received seven or eight sheets from his friend, which served "both to direct the plan in general and to supply matter for the particular epistles."

Bolingbroke was a "pure Deist," while Pope, if we may accept Lord Chesterfield's testimony, was a Deist who believed in the immortality of the soul, though he rejected revelation. Bolingbroke's philosophy was partly borrowed from Leibnitz,[1] whom Pope had never read, but whose system he unconsciously preached at second-hand. Certain arguments were taken from Shaftesbury's "Characteristics," and King's "Origin of Evil"—works which Pope had probably studied for himself. The more enlightened minds of the day were filled with an eager curiosity about the first principles of Natural Religion, while arguments on such subjects as the necessity of evil and the benevolent dispensations of Providence were

[1] The "Essais de Théodicée."

rife. Pope, always the man of his time, treated the fashionable topic of philosophy in the same manner as he had, a quarter of a century earlier, treated the topic of literary criticism. He crystallised the vague ideas that were floating in the air, and tried to systematise his own, or rather his friends', metaphysical theories. Like Addison, he was ambitious to have it said that he "brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, tea-tables and coffee-houses."

As a moral poet by profession, Pope was keenly interested in the question of ethics, but he was by no means anxious to enter upon an open-eyed search for scientific truths. When he dealt with characters, as we have seen, he thought it permissible to colour his saints, blacken his sinners, and embroider plain facts. Moreover, connected argument was not his forte. His actual method of writing precluded him from following out a train of closely reasoned thought.[1] But at that period specialised knowledge and a logical training were not considered essential at any rate for a poet. The "Essay on Man" is a curious mixture of three or four systems, insomuch that different commentators have deduced from it different doctrines. In fact,

[1] Swift describes it in the following lines:

> Now backs of letters, though designed
> For those who more will need 'em,
> Are filled with hints and interlined—
> Himself can hardly read 'em.
>
> Each atom by some other struck,
> All turns and motions tries;
> Till in a lump together stuck,
> Behold a poem rise!

with its brilliant truisms and not less brilliant fallacies, it has been described as the realisation of metaphysical anarchy.

The Essay, which is addressed to Bolingbroke, opens with a discussion of the nature and state of man with respect to the universe. The poet invites his friend to beat with him the ample field of speculation :

> Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
> And catch the manners living as they rise.
> Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,
> But vindicate the ways of God to man.

The last line gives the key-note to the whole Essay. The poet's design was, as Bolingbroke said, to plead the cause of Providence, and apologise for, or explain away, the unequal distribution of good and evil, happiness and suffering. He argues that man has no right to judge the ways of Providence out of his own finite knowledge, since he is ignorant of all systems but his own, and sees but a part, not the whole. As with the lower animals, his happiness depends largely upon his ignorance of future events.

> The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
> Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
> Pleased to the last, he crops the flowery food,
> And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.

It is far better to hope than to know, because—

> Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
> Man never is, but always to be blessed.

The presumptuous mind that criticises the dis-

pensations of Providence is bidden to take the simple faith of the savage for an example :

> Lo, the poor Indian ! whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds or hears Him in the wind.
> His soul proud science never taught to stray
> Far as the solar walk or Milky Way ;
> Yet simple nature to his hope has given
> Behind the cloud-topped hill an humbler heaven ;
> Some safer world in depths of wood embraced,
> Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,
> Where slaves once more their native land behold,
> No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
> To be, contents his natural desire ;
> He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire ;
> But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
> His faithful dog shall bear him company.

The first Almighty Cause, urges the poet, acts not by partial, but by general laws. Nature errs not from her gracious ends, even when earthquakes swallow up nations, or tempests sweep them to the deep. If nature thus deviates, why not man ?

> If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
> Why then a Borgia or a Catiline ?

Man has no right to be discontented because he is a little lower than the angels, nor should he envy the attributes of the lower creatures—the strength of the bull, the scent of the hound, or the microscopic vision of the fly.[1] Increased delicacy of the senses would leave him—

> Tremblingly alive all o'er,
> To smart and agonise at every pore ;

[1] In this connection occurs the justly famous couplet about the spider :

> The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine !
> Feels at each thread, and lives along the line.

Or, quick effluvia darting through the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain.

If in the scheme of creation one step was broken, the great scale would be destroyed; and if each system is alike essential, the least confusion in one alone would destroy the whole.

Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurled,
Being on being wrecked, and world on world,
Heav'ns whole foundations to their centre nod,
And nature trembles to the throne of God;
All this dread order break—for whom? for thee?
Vile worm! O madness! pride! impiety!

The conclusion is that all discord is merely harmony misunderstood, and all partial evil universal good.

And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.

The second Epistle deals with the nature and state of man with respect to himself as an individual. The key-note is struck with the opening lines:

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is man.

A study of man, whom alone he can hope to understand, will show that—

Two principles in human nature reign:
Self-love to urge, and reason to restrain.

The passions are modes of self-love, and Pope recurs to his favourite theory of the ruling passion, which swallows up all others. Each passion, when guided by reason, is credited with its corresponding virtue: avarice with prudence, envy with emulation,

and so forth. Each age is supplied with a suitable passion:

> Behold the child, by nature's kindly law,
> Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw:
> Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,
> A little louder, but as empty quite;
> Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,
> And beads and prayer-books are the toys of age:
> Pleased with this bauble still, as that before;
> Till tired, he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er.

The third Epistle deals with the nature and state of man with respect to society, and argues that true self-love and social are the same.

> All served, all serving: nothing stands alone;
> The chain holds on, and where it ends unknown.

The reason of man and the instinct of brutes are compared, and the poet asks:

> Who made the spider parallels design,
> Sure as Demoivre,[1] without rule or line?
> Who bid the stork, Columbus-like, explore
> Heavens not his own, and worlds unknown before?
> Who calls the council, states the certain day,
> Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?

The primitive state of man is pictured as a kind of golden age, when human beings lived innocently and happily, not only with one another, but also with the brute creation. The state of nature, according to Pope, was the reign of God, and he describes the life of that pre-historic period with the calm certainty of an eye-witness:

[1] A French mathematical teacher who settled in London, having been driven from France by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He was a friend of Newton's.

Pride then was not; nor arts, that pride to aid;
Man walked with beast joint tenant of the shade;
The same his table, and the same his bed;
No murder clothed him, and no murder fed.

. . . . . .

Ah! how unlike the man of times to come,
Of half that lives the butcher and the tomb!

Pope's love of animals made him theoretically against the practice of eating meat, from which he pretends that all evils and vices arose; but he was not himself a vegetarian. Natural history was not his strong point; in fact, he looked with as much contempt upon the researches of scientific men as upon the labours of verbal scholars; but he gives a pretty, fanciful description of the method by which human beings took their instructions in various kinds of knowledge from the lower animals.[1] The voice of nature commanded men to—

Learn from the birds what food the forests yield;
Learn from the beasts the physic of the field;
Thy arts of building from the bee receive;
Learn of the mole to plough, the worm to weave;
Learn of the little nautilus to sail,
Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.

Following the example of the ants and bees, man was supposed to have founded an ideal patriarchal state, where "love was liberty and nature law." But this ideal community was at length broken up, and the people enslaved by "Th' enormous faith of

[1] "Democritus held and proved that most of the arts we have were taught us by other animals, as by the spider to weave and sew, by the swallow to build, by the swan and nightingale music, and by several animals to make medicines" (Montaigne's "Essays").

many made for one." Force first made conquest, and conquest made the law, until superstition taught the tyrant awe, and then became more tyrannous than he. It was only through the teaching of self-love that kings learned justice and benevolence, and recognised the stern necessity of practising virtue in self-defence, since to injure one member of a community was to injure all. And then follow the celebrated lines which were the subject of much discussion and animadversion at the time they appeared :

> For forms of government let fools contest ;
> Whate'er is best administered is best.
> For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight ;
> He can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

The fourth Epistle deals with the nature and state of man with respect to happiness. The key-note will be found in the couplet :

> Know then this truth (enough for man to know),
> Virtue alone is happiness below.

According to Pope, or rather his Epicurean teachers, happiness was the end of life and virtue only the means. Those who sought happiness had merely to take nature's path.

> Obvious her goods, in no extreme they dwell ;
> There needs but thinking right and meaning well.[1]

The poet tries to prove that in this world "equal is common sense and common ease." He was a

[1] Pope seems to have imagined that to think rightly and mean well was a perfectly simple and easy performance. Any one who thought wrongly, *i.e.* disagreed with himself, was set down as a knave or a fool.

good deal worried, however, by the perverseness of the wise and virtuous, who were by no means always as comfortable and prosperous as the foolish and wicked. According to the philosophy that he had imbibed from Bolingbroke, no after-life was needed in which good men were to be compensated for their sufferings here. Pope observes that happiness does not depend on riches, fame, or wisdom, but rather on health, peace, and competence. But it might be argued that the virtuous are not always healthy and at peace, nor have they invariably a competence. He hastens to explain that accidents must happen to all alike, and that nature cannot suspend her laws, even to save a holy man from harm. Sickness and death fall impartially on the evil and on the good.

> Say, was it virtue, more though Heav'n ne'er gave,
> Lamented Digby,[1] sunk thee to the grave?
> Tell me, if virtue made the son expire,
> Why, full of days and honour, lives the sire?[2]
> Why drew Marseilles' good bishop purer breath
> When nature sickened, and each gale was death![3]
> Or why so long (in life if long there be)
> Lent Heav'n a parent to the poor and me?

If the good man is poor (here the argument grows desperate), it may be that he is indolent, and in any case the reward of virtue is not mere bread, which may be earned by every knave who tills the soil. All that the virtuous ask is contentment (as if even a

[1] Pope's friend and correspondent, the Hon. Robert Digby.

[2] William, fifth Lord Digby, the father of Robert. He died in 1752, aged 92.

[3] M. de Belsunce, who became Bishop of Marseilles in 1709. During the epidemic of the plague, in 1720, he distinguished himself by his activity and devotion. He lived till 1755.

saint could be content in a state of starvation), and only a fool would suppose that God hates the worthy soul "because he wants a thousand pounds a year."

Our philosopher is on much firmer ground when he proceeds to prove that fame, rank, and genius do not necessarily confer happiness.

> Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
> The rest is all but leather and prunella.[1]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?
> Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards.

It is next asked wherein true greatness lies, and the question is answered in the splendid lines:

> Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,
> Is but the more a fool, the more a knave.
> Who noble ends by noble means obtains,
> Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains,
> Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed
> Like Socrates, that man is great indeed.

Superior talents are depreciated in their turn, like fame and riches:

> If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,
> The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind!
> Or, ravished with the whistling of a name,
> See Cromwell damned to everlasting fame.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that "Virtue alone is happiness below." The good man is no slave to sect, but looks through nature up to nature's God. He learns the last great purpose of the human soul.

> And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,
> All end—in love of God and love of man.

[1] The leather of the cobbler's apron or the prunella of the clergyman's gown.

Having proved, to his own satisfaction, the positive happiness of the righteous in the best of all possible worlds, Pope concludes with a fine apostrophe to St. John, "the master of the poet and his song," in the course of which he adjures his friend to—

Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,
To fall with dignity, with temper rise;
Formed by thy converse happily to steer
From grave to gay, from lively to severe;
Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
Intent to reason, or polite to please.
Oh! while along the stream of time thy name
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,
Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph and partake the gale?
When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
Shall then this verse to future age pretend
Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend?
That, urged by thee, I turned the tuneful art
From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;
From wit's false mirror held up nature's light;
Showed erring pride, Whatever is, is right?
That reason, passion, answer one great aim;
That true self-love and social are the same;
That virtue only makes our bliss below;
And all our knowledge is ourselves to know.

CHAPTER XLIV

1733

The Reception of the "Essay on Man"—Death of Mrs. Pope—Country House Visits—Dennis's Benefit

THE reception of the "Essay on Man" was mixed, but on the whole flattering. The rumour that it was the work of an eminent divine, industriously spread by Pope himself, was generally believed, and many good folk read the poem as a pious manual. Some people declared that they could not understand one word of it, though when they discovered that it was by the great Mr. Pope, the obscurity became less apparent. Warburton,[1] the future champion of the Essay, said that it was collected from the worst passages of the worst authors, and that the doctrines were rank Atheism. No general attack, however, was made on the orthodoxy of the poem till it was translated into French.

[1] William Warburton (1698–1779), the future Bishop of Gloucester, began his career in an attorney's office. He took orders in 1723. He had not published much beyond translations and pamphlets at this time (1733), but he was the friend and correspondent of Theobald, and other literary men of the Grub Street community. His patron was Sir Robert Sutton, who gave him the living of Brant Broughton in 1728. Warburton is credited with the saying that Milton "borrowed out of pride, Dryden from want of leisure, Addison from modesty, and Pope from want of genius."

In a note prefixed to an edition of the Essay that was published in 1735, Pope says that he wrote it in verse rather than prose for two reasons. First, because principles and precepts so written strike and hold the reader more strongly; secondly, because he found he could express himself more shortly in verse, "and much of the force as well as the grace of the arguments depend on their conciseness." He claims to have reduced the science of human nature to a few clear points, since the disputes had all been occasioned by the details. He contends that if his Essay has any merit it is because it steers between the extremes of doctrines seemingly opposite, passes over terms utterly unintelligible, and forms a temperate, yet not inconsistent, and short yet not imperfect, system of ethics. Pope probably did not realise that he had represented the course of events as what Johnson calls "a necessary concatenation of indissoluble fatality"; while Bolingbroke is said to have ridiculed him behind his back for teaching what he had not learnt, and advancing principles which he did not understand.[1] But the Richardsons, who were in Pope's confidence, declared that he was well aware of

[1] It would have been well if Bolingbroke, instead of encouraging Pope to write didactic and controversial verse, had remembered his own dictum:

"Should the poet make syllogisms in verse, or pursue a long process of reasoning in the didactic style, he would be sure to tire his readers on the whole. . . . He must contract, he may shadow, he has a right to omit, whatever may not be cast in the poetic mould, and when he cannot instruct he may hope to please. In short, it seems to me that the business of philosophers is to dilate, to press, to prove, to convince; and that of the poet to hint, to touch his subjects with short and spirited strokes, to warm the affections and speak to the heart."

the deistic and fatalistic tendency of certain passages in his poem, which they had often discussed with him.

The secret of the authorship was strictly kept until the appearance of the third book in the winter of 1733-4. Besides Bolingbroke, Fortescue and Richardson were in the secret, but for a time both Swift and Caryll were kept in the dark. On March 8 Pope wrote to Caryll:

"The town is now very full of a new poem entitled 'An Essay on Man,' attributed, I think with reason, to a divine. It has merit, in my opinion, but not so much as they give it. At least it is incorrect, and has some inaccuracies in the expressions—one or two of an unhappy kind, for they may cause the author's sense to be turned, contrary to what I think his intention, a little unorthodoxically."

The subject is continued in a letter on March 20. "The poem you writ to me of, prevails much in the opinion of the world, and is better relished than at first, insomuch that I hear we are in a week or two to have the second part to the same tune. I cannot but say I think there is merit in it; and I perceive the divines have no objection to it, though now it is agreed not to be written by one—Dr. Croxall, Dr. Secker, and some others having solemnly denied it."[1]

Bolingbroke was well aware of Pope's moral cowardice, his desire to appear orthodox to the orthodox, and free-thinking to the free-thinking. "I know," he writes on one occasion, "your mental precaution enough to know that you will screen

[1] The poem was also attributed to Bolingbroke, Young, and Lord Paget.

yourself against any direct charge of heterodoxy." The poet himself confessed that he did not proceed with his comprehensive ethical scheme because he did not care to live continually in boiling water, and he could not say what he desired to say without provoking every church on the face of the earth.

Pope's long and devoted attendance on his mother was brought to an end by her death on June 7 of this year.[1] On June 10 he wrote to ask Richardson to come and sketch the dead face.

"Her end," he says, "was as easy as her life was innocent; and as it cost her not a groan, or even a sigh, there is yet upon her countenance such an expression of tranquillity, nay, almost of pleasure, that [it is so far from horrid] it is even amiable to behold it. It would afford the finest image of a saint expired that ever painter drew; and it would be the greatest obligation which even that obliging art could ever bestow upon a friend, if you could come and sketch it for me."

Mrs. Pope was buried the next day in Twickenham church, being carried to the grave by six poor men of the village and followed by six poor women, to each of whom was given a suit of dark grey cloth. Later, Pope put up an obelisk to the memory of his mother in a secluded part of his grounds. On the pedestal was inscribed:

Ah Editha!
Matrum Optima!
Mulierum Amantissima!
Vale!

[1] She was 91, according to her baptismal register, but Pope thought she was 93.

In a letter on the subject of his loss, Pope observes: "Reason and religion both tell me it is best, but I am really more troubled than I would own. The very habitude of so many years, if there were little affection, would have this effect, for men are creatures more of habit than principle. But, in a word, not to seem a better man than I am, my attendance upon her living was not virtue, only duty; and my melancholy for her death is not virtue, but weakness." A great and new era in his life has begun, and he is settling all his affairs as though he too might soon die. He means to leave home for awhile, first joining Lord Peterborough at Southampton, and later paying a long-promised visit to Ladyholt.

Swift was eagerly desirous that his friend should visit him in Dublin. There was just then a good opportunity of making a comfortable journey, as Dean Cottrell and his sister were coming over. Pope, however, preferred making plans for journeys when it was impossible to carry them into effect. In response to the dean's invitation he pleaded his dread of the sea. Considering that he suffered from colical pains and a weak chest, he felt sure that sea-sickness would kill him. And even if he survived the voyage, he was certain that the cramming and flattery of the dean's most poetical country would put an end to him.[1]

[1] Swift said this was quite a mistaken idea. "It is true," he admitted, "our meat and wine is cheaper here, as it always is in the poorest countries, because there is no money to pay for them. . . . All my acquaintance tell me they know not above three families where they can occasionally dine in a whole year. Dr. Delany is the only gentleman I know who keeps one certain

It was for the opposite reason that the dean refused a pressing invitation to England. He required horse exercise, and he never rode out without two servants behind him. Also he could not dine without a pint of good claret. He told Arbuthnot that Pope and Bolingbroke were too wise and too temperate, and too profound for him. "You are both too poor for me," he wrote to Pope, "but he [Bolingbroke] is much the poorer. With you I will find grass and wine and servants, but with him not." Pope had been anxious to reveal all the mysteries of his philosophical work to his friend, and had assured him, "You will not think that I am not merry enough, nor angry enough. It will not want for satire, but as for anger, I know it not; or at least only that sort of which the prophet speaks, 'Be ye angry and sin not.'" He is delighted at having earned the good opinion of Lord Orrery, since the only praises he thinks worth having are those bestowed by virtue for virtue. His poetry he will cheerfully abandon to the critics, but his morals he commits to the testimony of those who know him best.

But though he dared not face the sea, Pope lost little time in setting out upon an overland journey from one country house to another. On August 9 he wrote to Bethel that he had been wandering about ever since his mother's death. He had spent a fortnight in Essex—presumably with Lord Oxford—was then at Dawley, and was going on to Cirencester.

day in the week to entertain seven or eight friends at dinner, and to pass the evening, where there is nothing of excess either in eating or drinking."

"I wish," he adds, "I did not leave our friend [Miss Blount], who deserves more quiet, more health and happiness than can be found in such a family. . . . I have now but too much melancholy leisure, and no other care but to finish my 'Essay on Man.' There will be in it one line which may offend you, I fear,[1] and yet, I will not alter or omit it, unless you come to town and prevent me before I print it."

The Blounts had not taken a villa at Petersham this year, much to Pope's displeasure. Earlier in the summer he had written to Caryll: "As to your god-daughter and my friend, there is little hopes of seeing her here, for they made the home at Petersham so uneasy last summer that it was agreed to put it off, though I should have thought to have kept that of £20 a year, and put off the London one of £45 had been wiser, since a lodging for three months might have served as well there. But the elder sister is in eternal youth. I lament for poor Patty, whose health is concerned as well as her quiet, and both which have been sacrificed to their humour this many a year."

September was spent between the Carylls at Ladyholt and Lord Peterborough at Bevis Mount, near Southampton.[2] In October Pope was back again at Twickenham, working at the "Epistle to

[1] The allusion to "blameless Bethel."

[2] During the visit to Bevis Mount, Pope and Lord Peterborough went to Winchester College, where they offered prizes for the best copy of verses on the Campaign of Valentia. One prize was gained by William Whitehead, afterwards Poet Laureate, and the other by James Hampton, later known as the translator of Polybius.

Lord Cobham," and seeing the last sheets of the "Essay on Man" through the press.

An act of genuine kindness and magnanimity on the part of the poet must be recorded at this time. His old enemy, Dennis, was blind, sick, and in distressed circumstances. A performance of *The Provoked Husband* was given for his benefit on December 18, and Pope furnished the Prologue, which was spoken by Theophilus Cibber. This is a fairly spirited piece of work, beginning with an allusion to "Belisarius, old and blind." The audience is reminded that the chiefs and the common soldiers were moved at the sight, and the poet exclaims :

> Such, such emotions should in Britons rise
> When, pressed by want and weakness, Dennis lies ;
> Dennis, who long had warred with modern Huns,
> Their quibbles routed, and defied their puns ;
> A desperate bulwark, sturdy, firm, and fierce,
> Against the Gothic sons of frozen verse.

The audience was reminded how valiantly Dennis had attacked the Pretender, the French tyrant, and the Pope.

> If there's a Briton then, true bred and born,
> Who holds dragoons and wooden shoes in scorn ;
> If there's a critic of distinguished rage ;
> If there's a senior who contemns this age ;
> Let him to-night his just assistance lend,
> And be the Critic's, Briton's, Old Man's friend.

The performance brought a hundred pounds, which helped to ease the last days of Dennis, who died on January 6, 1734, aged 77.

CHAPTER XLV

1734

"Epistle to Lord Cobham"—Country Visits—"The Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace"—Bath—"Sober Advice from Horace"

THE "Epistle to Lord Cobham"[1] on the "Knowledge and Character of Men" was finished in the winter of 1733-4, and published early in the new year. A manuscript draft of the poem was sent to Lord Cobham in October, and on November 1 he wrote from Stowe:

"Though I have not modesty enough not to be pleased with your extraordinary compliment, I have wit enough to know how little I deserve it. . . . However, I have the honour of having received a public testimony of your esteem and friendship, and am as proud of it as I could be of any advantage which could happen to me." Lord Cobham, who considered the Epistle "the

[1] Sir Richard Temple (*c.* 1669–1749). He served with distinction under Marlborough, and was created Baron Cobham in 1717, and Viscount in 1718. He was a zealous Hanoverian, but fell out of favour with the Government and Court party by opposing Walpole's Excise Bill in 1731. He was deprived of his military commands, and did not regain them till after the fall of Walpole in 1742. He rebuilt Stowe, and laid out the famous gardens with the help of Bridgeman.

clearest and cleanest" of all that Pope had written, made one or two suggestions about the types of character that might be introduced, notably that of an old beauty ordering her coffin to be lined with white satin and gold fringe. This suggestion gave Pope the idea for the character of Narcissa.

Pope's theory of the ruling passion, which was supposed to reconcile the apparent inconsistency of human nature, is further developed in the course of this Epistle. The poet's own couplet—

> To observations which ourselves we make,
> We grow more partial for th' observer's sake—

is particularly applicable to himself. He was an extreme instance of the amateur philosopher who insists upon cutting his facts to fit his theories.

It is urged that without the key provided by the ruling passion doctrine, the puzzle presented by the contradictions, affectations, and quick transitions of the mind would baffle the student of human nature.

> See the same man in vigour, in the gout;
> Alone, in company; in place or out;
> Early at business, and at hazard late;
> Mad at a fox-chase, wise at a debate;
> Drunk at a borough, civil at a ball;
> Friendly at Hackney, faithless at Whitehall.[1]

After giving examples of the inconsistencies of man in all ranks of life, the poet asks—

> Judge we by nature? Habit can efface,
> Int'rest o'ercome, or policy take place:

[1] The Middlesex members are put into nomination at Hackney. Therefore the allusion in the couplet is to the friendly profession of a candidate for Parliament, and his faithlessness when he finds himself secure in a seat.

By actions? those uncertainty divides:
By passions? These dissimulation hides:
Opinions? They still take a wider range:
Find, if you can, in what you cannot change.
Manners with fortunes, humours turn with climes,
Tenets with books, and principles with times.[1]

The two most celebrated instances of the ruling passion may be found in Mrs. Oldfield[2] with her desire to be beautiful, even in death, and the Duke of Wharton, with his unconquerable lust of praise. Thus:

Odious, in woollen! 'twould a saint provoke!
(Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke:)
No, let a charming chintz, and Brussels lace
Wrap my cold limbs and shade my lifeless face:
One would not, sure, be frightful when one's dead:
And—Betty—give this cheek a little red.

The satire on Wharton[3] goes home with the

[1] Of these eight lines Warton remarks: "We find here an anatomy of human nature; more sense and observation cannot well be compressed in a narrower space."

[2] Anne Oldfield, the famous actress (1683–1730). She was admirable alike in comedy and tragedy, but she made a great "hit" in the part of Narcissa in Cibber's play, *Love's Last Shift*. She was buried in Westminster Abbey, between the tombs of Craggs and Congreve, her body being clothed in a Holland shift with double ruffles of Brussels lace, a pair of new kid gloves, and a Brussels lace head-dress. An act compelling the dead to be buried in woollen had been passed in 1678, with the object of protecting homespun goods against foreign linen.

[3] Philip Wharton (1698–1731), son of the first Marquis of Wharton, and created Duke of Wharton in 1718. He was a brilliant speaker, a wit, a profligate, and a traitor. After running through his fortune he joined the cause of "James III." in 1726, and was outlawed in 1727 for serving against Gibraltar. He adopted the Roman Catholic religion, and died in a monastery in Catalonia. Pope had been jealous of Wharton's friendship with Lady Mary Wortley, and he knew that the duke had written a satire against him.

more certainty because the duke is given credit for his brilliant parts at the same time that he is condemned for his vices. It is difficult to believe in a monster, and most of the satirical characters and caricatures of this period portray monsters of the most inhuman type; but we are more easily persuaded of the truth of a portrait in which the subject is given human features and there is a due regard to light and shade. A part of the character may be quoted :—

Wharton, the scorn and wonder of our days,
Whose ruling passion was the lust of praise:
Born with whate'er could win it from the wise,
Women and fools must like him, or he dies;
Though wond'ring senates hung on all he spoke,
The club must hail him master of the joke.
Shall parts so various aim at nothing new?
He'll shine a Tully and a Wilmot too.

. . . . . .

Thus with each gift of nature and of art,
And wanting nothing but an honest heart;
Grown all to all, from no one vice exempt,
And most contemptible to shun contempt;
His passion still, to covet general praise,
His life, to forfeit it a thousand ways;
A constant bounty which no friend has made;
An angel tongue which no man can persuade!
A fool, with more of wit than half mankind,
Too rash for thought, for action too refined:
A tyrant to the wife his heart approves;[1]
A rebel to the very king he loves;
He dies, sad outcast of each church and state,
And harder still! flagitious, yet not great!
Ask you why Wharton broke through every rule?
'Twas all for fear the knaves should call him fool.

[1] Wharton was a bad and neglectful husband to his first wife, Miss Holmes, but there is no evidence that he was a tyrant to his

The Epistle concludes with a fine compliment to Lord Cobham :

> And you, brave Cobham ! to the latest breath,
> Shall feel your ruling passions strong in death :
> Such in those moments as in all the past,
> " Oh, save my country, Heaven ! " shall be your last.

Swift was beginning to grow restive because none of these fine compliments came his way. He was always ambitious of the immortality that is conferred by mention in the work of contemporary genius, and more than once addressed to Pope the plea of Cicero, *Orna me.*

" I am pleased and flattered by your expression of *Orna me*," replied the poet. " The chief pleasure this work [1] can give me is, that I can in it, with propriety, decency, and justice, insert the name and character of every friend I have, and every man that deserves to be loved or adorned. . . . Your lady friend is *semper eadem*, and I have written an Epistle to her [2] on that qualification in a female character, which is thought by my chief critic in your absence [Lord Bolingbroke] to be my *chef d'œuvre* ; but it cannot be printed perfectly in an age so sore of satire, and so willing to misapply characters."

After covering his house with stucco, and thus making it more deserving of the name of " Little Whitehall," which his friends had given it, Pope

second wife, a Miss O'Byrne, who was one of the maids-of-honour to the Queen of Spain.

[1] The " Moral Essays," which were intended as part of one great work.

[2] The " Epistle to a Lady on the Characters of Women." It was published in 1735.

set off early in June upon his summer rambles. Bolingbroke tells Swift on June 27 that the poet was then at Cirencester.

"He came thither from my Lord Cobham's; he came to my Lord Cobham's from Mr. Dormer's; to Mr. Dormer's from London; to London from Chiswick; from Chiswick to my farm; from my farm to his own garden; and he goes soon from Lord Bathurst's to Lord Peterborough's; after which he returns to my farm again. The demon of verse sticks close to him. He has been imitating the Satire of Horace which begins, 'Ambubaiarum collegia pharmacopol,' etc.,[1] and has chosen rather to weaken the images than hurt chaste ears overmuch. He has sent it to me; but I shall keep his secret as he desires, and shall not, I think, return him the copy; for the rogue has fixed a ridicule upon me, which some events of my life would seem perhaps to justify him in doing.[2]

"I am glad you approve of his 'Moral Essays.' They will do more good than the sermons and writings of some who had a mind to find great fault with them."

We get a glimpse of Pope on his travels from a letter addressed to Lady Suffolk on June 19 by Mr. Berkeley, to whom she was married the following year.[3] Writing from Shotover, near Oxford (then in the possession of Mr. Schutz), he says:

[1] Published under the title of "Sober Advice from Horace." It is a sermon against adultery, though not in favour of morality.

[2] Pope alludes to St. John's predilection for women of the lowest class, whom he adored—temporarily—as if they had been princesses.

[3] Lady Suffolk retired from the position of Court favourite this

"We performed our journey hither with great ease, only little Pope was very ill the whole day, and compassion for him may pass for a reason why I was so little entertained with a very lively conversation which at times would have been very agreeable to me, as would the misfortunes which were very happily contrived for the major-general [Dormer] during the whole journey. Pope grew better at supper, and of course very irregular, and laughed at me for the care I pretended to take of him."

From Rousham, a little later, he writes that "Pope diverted us with translating Horace. I am sorry, for your sake, I can remember but one couplet, which you shall have to make you some amends for the stuff you have already perused.

> Our ancient kings (and sure those kings were wise)
> Judged for themselves, and saw with their own eyes."

Translating Horace would be thought a curious diversion for a country-house in these days, but that the poet was able to enter into the chaff and jokes of the party may be gathered from Mr. Berkeley's report that "The major-general's tormentor, Pope, has laughed himself fat at poor Jemmy's expense, who in proportion has fretted himself thin."

From Bevis Mount Pope wrote to Bethel, on August 6, that he had been living in great retire-

year. Her husband was dead, and she, at the age of 54, consoled herself with the Hon. George Berkeley. She lived till 1767.

ment, having passed two whole months in the country.[1]

"My health has been but bad," he adds, "especially my eyes, which put me often in mind of yours. If I could but ride on horseback, it would make me some amends: whereas to read is painful, and to talk wastes the spirits; which are all I can do except write and study, which gives me the headache, and sometimes angers other people. Have you seen the last satire of Horace, in which you are so ill-treated? . . . Mrs. Blount is with my Lady Gerard in Surrey; her affairs go ill, and Robert's attorney is as shuffling as Robert himself. . . ."[2]

The "last satire" was "The Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace," which was published on July 3. Bethel plays the part of Ofella (or Ofellus) in this, and a discourse on temperance and frugality is put into his mouth:

> Hear Bethel's sermon, one not versed in schools,
> But strong in sense, and wise without the rules.

Gluttony is held up to condemnation in the person of Richard Oldfield, who dissipated a fortune of £1,500 a year "in the simple luxury of good

[1] Pope always enjoyed his visits to Lord Peterborough at Bevis Mount. On September 1 he writes to Lord Oxford:

"You cannot think how happy we are here. I wish, my lord, you saw it. If you did, you would be very well pleased, very well fed, and very merry, if I am not very much mistaken. We have the best sea-fish and river-fish in the world, much tranquillity, some reading, no politics, admirable melons, an excellent bowling-green and nine-pin alley, besides the amusements of a witch in the parish. I have an incomparable story to tell you on the last of these, but it would fill two sheets of paper."

[2] From the unpublished MS.

living." As examples of sordid penury the Wortley Montagus are ridiculed under the names of Avidien and Avidien's wife, who—

> Sell their presented partridges and fruits,
> And humbly live on rabbits and on roots:
> One half-pint bottle serves them both to dine,
> And is at once their vinegar and wine.
> But on some lucky day (as when they found
> A lost bank-bill, or heard their son was drowned),[1]
> At such a feast, old vinegar to spare,
> Is what two souls so generous cannot bear;
> Oil, though it stink, they drop by drop impart,
> But souse the cabbage with a bounteous heart.

When Bethel's sermon comes to an end, Pope takes up the tale, and describes the virtuous content in which his own life has been passed.[2]

> In South Sea day not happier, when surmised
> The lord of thousands, than if now excised; [3]
> In forest planted by a father's hand,[4]
> Than in five acres now of rented land.
> Content with little, I can piddle here,
> On brocoli and mutton, round the year;
> But ancient friends (though poor, or out of play)
> That touch my bell, I cannot turn away.
> 'Tis true, no turbots dignify my boards,
> But gudgeons, flounders, what my Thames affords:

[1] An allusion to the ill-doing son of the Wortley Montagus, who ran away from school three times, and was generally found on board a ship. He had finally to be placed in Holland under the care of a tutor-keeper.

[2] In the original this passage is left in the mouth of Ofella.

[3] An allusion to Walpole's unpopular Excise Bill, which he was compelled to drop in 1733.

[4] The "forest" was only twenty acres, and the most successful plantation was that of artichokes.

To Hounslow Heath I point and Bansted Down,
Thence comes your mutton, and these chicks my own:
From yon old walnut-tree a shower shall fall;
And grapes long lingering on my only wall,
And figs from standard and espalier join;
The devil is in you if you cannot dine:
Then cheerful healths (your mistress shall have place)
And, what's more rare, a poet shall say grace.

Swift is introduced at the close of the "Imitation," but without the superb compliment for which he yearned. He is merely represented as expressing a hope that this modest degree of prosperity may last, and a wish that the house were his friend's own property.

Pity! to build without a son or wife;
Why, you'll enjoy it only all your life.

The poet replies with a more ingenious rhyme than usual—

Well, if the use be mine, can it concern one
Whether the name belong to Pope or Vernon? [1]

Arbuthnot's health was failing at this time, and Pope had written a sympathetic letter from Cirencester. He had bade his servants inquire for the doctor and send accounts, but, being dissatisfied with their reports, had charged Martha Blount to keep him informed of his old friend's condition. Arbuthnot, who was lodging at Hampstead for the sake of the air, replied in a letter which, by reason of its humaneness, friendliness, and calm resignation to the decrees of Fate, is eminently characteristic of the man:

"I have the satisfaction to find that I am as

[1] Pope's landlady was Mrs. Vernon.

officiously served by my friends as he that has thousands to leave in legacies. Besides the assurance of their sincerity, God Almighty has made my bodily distress as easy as a thing of that nature can be. I have found some relief, at least sometimes, from the air of this place. My nights are bad, but many poor creatures have worse. . . .[1] I make it my last request that you continue that noble disdain and abhorrence of vice which you seem so naturally endued with, but still with a due regard to your own safety; and study more to reform than to chastise, though the one often cannot be effected without the other."

Pope was evidently moved by this gentle appeal, though he was eager in his own defence. He replies that he would manifest his abhorrence of vice with restriction, and in a less personal manner, "but general satire in times of general vice has no force, and is no punishment: people have ceased to be ashamed of it when so many are joined with them; and it is only by hunting one or two from the herd, that any examples can be made. . . . And in my low station, with no other power than this, I hope to deter, if not to reform."

It was in consequence of Arbuthnot's letter, and in consideration of the time and state in which it was written, that Pope determined to address to him a "Moral Epistle," a kind of combined *apologia* and bill of complaint. "It pleases me much," he assures the doctor, "to take this opportunity of testifying, to the public at least, if not to posterity, my obligation and friendship for, and from you, for

[1] Arbuthnot lingered on till February 1735.

From a photo by Emery Walker after the picture in the National Portrait Gallery attributed to William Hoare R.A.

ALEXANDER POPE.

so many years; that is all that is in it; for compliments are fulsome, and go for nothing."

After returning to Twickenham for a few days, Pope was persuaded to accompany Lord Bolingbroke to Bath. Doubtless he was the more easily induced to take this journey when he discovered that Patty Blount was also bound for Bath, on the advice of Dr. Arbuthnot.

"Her power of going," Pope remarked, "was wholly owing to my Lady Suffolk's friendship; for indeed from her own family she experiences none at all." The ladies started first, and in an undated letter, written a few days before his own departure, Pope inquired after Patty's health and well-being. He has passed a whole day at Hampstead with Dr. Arbuthnot, who was very cheerful, spent half the morning in the Long Room, and had card-parties every night.

"I hope by this time," he continues, "the pink-coloured riband in your hat is pulled off, and the pink-coloured gown put on. I will not joke upon that, though I did upon the riband, because, when people begin to sin, there may be hopes of amendment; but when the whole woman is become red as scarlet, there is no good to be done."

Lady Suffolk, he adds, had a strange power over him. She would not stir a day's journey for him, but he is following her chariot-wheels three days through rocks and waters, and will be at her feet on Sunday night. She will probably be at cards, and receive him as coldly as if he were archdeacon of the place; but he hopes for a better reception from Patty, who will doubtless have been at Mass,

From Bath Pope wrote to Bethel on September 28: "You will not expect my letter from this date. But so it is that partly fortune, partly friendship, have brought me hither, and extended my rambles to four months. I just looked upon Twickenham for three days with some pleasure and some melancholy, and, having kissed Bounce (my only friend now there), I came with Lord Bolingbroke to Bath. I can't say that any view of improving my own health by the waters was my motive, but I hoped to find a pleasure in seeing that of a friend of ours improve by them. Mrs. Patty Blount came hither with Lady Suffolk, and they live so regularly that I think she will be the better, and the doctor gives great hopes of it. . . . All your sisters are here. I saw Lady Cox yesterday at her house, and to-day Sir William and my Lady come to stay for a fortnight. Sir William is the greatest courtier we have in his devoir to Princess Amelia, and Mrs. Blount is to kiss her hand to-morrow. Mr. Cibber is here to celebrate her, and he writes his verses now in such a manner that no body can use them as they were wont to do. . . .

"While I was at Lord Bathurst's I was by no means well, but much better at Lord Peterborough's. The difference of air was very sensible between the two places. And that, together with the quiet I enjoyed there for six weeks, till your friend, Mrs. Cond (?) came and put a ferment in the country, was the cause (I dare say) that I have been so well ever since. Mrs. Blount felt as sensible a change between the flat country of Surrey, where she had been with Lady Gerard, and the clear air of Hamp-

shire, where they stayed a few days only in their way hither. . . ."[1]

A curious allusion to Pope and his friends occurs in a letter addressed by Lady Hervey to Lady Suffolk on September 23. Lady Hervey had good reason to dislike Pope, but if the allusion to "proud flesh" is really meant for Miss Blount, as has been supposed, it is strange that she should write in such a style of Lady Suffolk's travelling companion.[2]

"I am sorry," she begins, "our poor little friend was forced to go to the Bath for so unpleasant a distemper; for I am informed it was to get rid of some *proud flesh* that is grown to his *side*, and makes him extremely uneasy. It is thought it will prove a *mortification*, but I am satisfied if all the practitioners in the place he is in can administer any ease to him, he will be sure of it, for he always loved applying himself to all the quacks he could meet with; and, when he was in perfect health, was always fancying or feigning himself ill, often changed his physician, and would have three or four at a time; but they all found him out, and, the moment they felt his pulse, declared him only the *malade imaginaire*. I believe, though, his present disease has more reality in it; but I dare say he now does very like a lady of our acquaintance, and complains of every distemper but that which he really has."

[1] From the unpublished MS.

[2] It seems more probable that the "proud flesh," who was thought to prove a "mortification," was meant for another lady, perhaps his neighbour Lady Mary, whom he may have gone to Bath to avoid.

In the course of the winter the "Sober Advice from Horace" made its appearance. Bolingbroke, as we have seen, had let the secret out to Swift, but Pope stoutly denied the authorship of this "Imitation," although it was included in the edition of his "Works" published by Dodsley in 1738. He omitted it, however, from the edition prepared by Warburton, and it may therefore be concluded that he considered it unworthy his reputation as a professed moralist. In a letter, dated December 3, he says:

"There is a piece of poetry from Horace come out, which I warn you not to take for mine, though some people are willing to fix it on me: in truth, I should think it a very indecent sermon after the 'Essay on Man.' But in a week or so you will have a thing which is mine, and I hope not unworthy an honest man in his own just vindication from slanders of all sorts, and slanderers of what rank and quality soever. It is the last thing relating to myself I will ever trouble the public with."

CHAPTER XLVI

1735

"Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot"—"Characters of Women"

THE "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot"[1] appeared in January of this year. In his Advertisement Pope declares that he had no thought of publishing it till he was attacked by some persons of rank and quality, not only in his writings, but also in his person, morals, and family. Feeling that it was necessary to say something in his own defence, he had decided to put the last hand to this Epistle. The greater part of the work, however, appears to have been specially written in answer to the attacks by Lady Mary and Lord Hervey, since many of the allusions are to incidents that occurred in 1733-4. The famous "Character of Atticus" had, of course, seen the light as early as 1723, while the passage on verbal critics had appeared in the "Miscellanies" of 1727. It has been calculated that, out of four hundred and nineteen lines, only ninety-six were written earlier than 1733, and therefore Pope's claim that he had exercised extraordinary forbearance

[1] Afterwards called "The Prologue to the Satires."

in holding back his defence for many years must be disallowed.

This most interesting, because most autobiographical, of all the Epistles opens with a diatribe against the rhyming peers, bemused parsons, maudlin poetesses,[1] and insane geniuses who besieged the satirist in his Twickenham retreat, insisted on reading him their poems and plays, and asked him for advice, corrections, or prologues.

> Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
> They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
> . . . . .
> No place is sacred, not the church is free,
> E'en Sunday shines no Sabbath day to me.

On the horns of a dilemma, not daring to laugh or blame, the poet begins by giving the Horatian counsel—"Keep your piece nine years." But, wearied at length of importunities, he blurts the secret out—

> That secret to each fool, that he's an ass.

He defends himself against the charge of cruelty, since "No creature smarts so little as a fool." And as for a scribbler—

> Who shames a scribbler? break one cobweb through,
> He spins the slight, self-pleasing thread anew:
> Destroy his fib or sophistry—in vain!
> The creature's at his dirty work again!
> Throned in the centre of his thin designs,
> Proud of a vast extent of flimsy lines!
> Whom have I hurt? has poet yet, or peer
> Lost the arched eyebrow, or Parnassian sneer?

[1] Pope probably had poor Mrs. Barber in his mind, and her preposterous request that he would correct her verses.

And has not Colley still his lord and whore?
His butchers Henley, his freemasons Moore?[1]
Does not one table Bavius[2] still admit?
Still to one bishop Philips[3] seem a wit?

But his fools were not nearly so terrible when they were angry as when they repented. Then they ridiculed him in high, heroic dedications, defended him from Grub Street, printed his letters, and, worst of all, called themselves his friends. "Why did I write," he exclaims in now familiar lines:

Why did I write? What sin, to me unknown,
Dipped me in ink, my parents' or my own?
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.
I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobeyed:
The Muse but served to ease some friend, not wife,
To help me through this long disease, my life.
. . . . .
But why, then, publish? Granville the polite,
And knowing Walsh would tell me I could write;
Well-natured Garth inflamed with early praise,
And Congreve loved, and Swift endured my lays;
The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield read,
Even mitred Rochester would nod the head,
And St. John's self (great Dryden's friend before)
With open arms received one poet more.

The satirist denies that he had ever claimed homage from "the race that write," and declares, not quite accurately:

I ne'er with wits or witlings passed my days,
To spread about the itch of verse and praise;

[1] Moore-Smythe was a prominent member of this society.

[2] In the first edition the name of Arnall, the party-hack, is given.

[3] Bishop Boulter, afterwards Primate of Ireland, was Philips's patron.

Nor, like a puppy, daggled through the town,
To fetch and carry sing-song up and down.

He left fops, poetry, and prate to Bufo. Then follows the famous "Character of Bufo-Halifax,"[1] beginning :

Proud as Apollo on his forkèd hill,
Sat full-blown Bufo, puffed by every quill ;
Led with soft dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.

The poet himself, lapsing into autobiography again, describes, in chiselled verse, his independence of place or patron.

Oh, let me live my own, and die so too !
(To live and die is all I have to do)
Maintain a poet's dignity and ease,
And see what friends, and read what books I please ;
Above a patron, though I condescend
Sometimes to call a minister my friend.
I was not born for courts or great affairs ;
I pay my debts, believe, and say my prayers ;
Can sleep without a poem in my head,
Nor know if Dennis be alive or dead.

No honest man, he explains, need fear his lash : only the babbling blockhead—

Who tells, whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
And if he lie not, must at least betray.

Among such traitorous blockheads was Sporus, otherwise Lord Hervey. At the mention of the name Arbuthnot is supposed to intervene and protest against satire being wasted on—

[1] This character was first intended for Bubb Dodington, but, by the addition of a stroke or two, was made to apply to Halifax.

That thing of silk,
That mere white curd of asses' milk.[1]

The protest leads to the famous "Character of Lord Hervey," beginning—

Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings—

and ending with the close-packed couplet:

Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.

In sharp contrast to the portrait of his enemy, Pope sketches for us a portrait of himself. He may have studied his lineaments in the glass, but he was careful to don rose-coloured spectacles. This is Alexander as he appeared to himself:

Nor fortune's worshipper nor fashion's fool,
Not lucre's madman nor ambition's tool,
Not proud nor servile, be one poet's praise,
That, if he pleased, he pleased by manly ways;
That flattery, e'en to kings, he held a shame,
And thought a lie in prose or verse the same;
That not in fancy's maze he wandered long,
But stooped to truth, and moralised his song;
That not for fame, but virtue's better end,
He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,
The damning critic, half-approving wit,
The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit;
Laughed at the loss of friends he never had,
The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad;
The distant threats of vengeance on his head,
The blow unfelt, the tear he never shed;[2]

[1] Considering that Pope himself was frequently put upon a regimen of asses' milk, this line would have been better omitted.

[2] An allusion to the account of his whipping published in "A Pop upon Pope."

The tale revived, the lie so oft o'erthrown,
The imputed trash, and dulness not his own;
The morals blackened when the writings 'scape,
The libelled person, and the pictured shape;[1]
Abuse on all he loved, or loved him, spread,
A friend in exile, or a father dead;
The whisper, that to greatness still too near,
Perhaps yet vibrates on his sovereign's ear.

Arbuthnot asks why Pope insults the poor and offends the great. The poet replies that a knave is a knave to him, whether he succeed or fail. At the same time he tries to prove how kind is his heart, how humble his spirit, how forgiving his disposition.

Yet, soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,
Sappho can tell you how this man was bit:[2]
This dreaded satirist Dennis will confess
Foe to his pride, but friend to his distress.
So humble he has knocked at Tibbald's door,
Has drunk with Cibber, nay, has rhymed for Moore.
Full ten years slandered, did he once reply?
Three thousand suns went down on Welsted's lie.

Briefly the poet touches on his (imaginary) pedigree, his father's honourable life and peaceful

[1] As in the "Verses to the Imitator of Horace" and the caricatures by Hogarth and others.

[2] An allusion to Lady Mary Wortley. The idea was thus developed in the manuscript:

Once, and but once, his heedless youth was bit,
And liked that dangerous thing, a female wit:
Safe, as he thought, though all the prudent chid;
He writ no libels, but my lady did:
Great odds in amorous or poetic game,
Where woman's is the sin, and man's the shame.

The last couplet represents a state of things quite contrary to that which obtains in civilised society.

death, and concludes his *apologia* with a touching allusion to his own long and devoted attendance on his aged mother.

> Me let the tender office long engage
> To rock the cradle of reposing age,
> With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
> Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death,
> Explore the thoughts, explain the asking eye,
> And keep a while one parent from the sky.

With this superb Epistle Pope consolidated his position as Moralist Extraordinary to the British Nation. He had declared that no honest man should feel his lash, but then the term "honest man" was only applied to his own friends. He thought that honour and merit were the monopoly of one small Tory coterie. "He posed as a superior being descended from a superior sphere to lash scribblers who had not only sinned against his taste by their verses, but outraged his moral sense by the scandalousness of their lives."[1] But his moral sense and his literary taste were not offended by the peccadilloes or the feeble compositions[2] of his own circle.

About a month after the publication of the "Epistle to Arbuthnot" the "Epistle to a Lady on the Characters of Women" made its appearance. It was an open secret that the lady was Martha Blount. The poem had been written a year earlier, but fear of scandalous tongues had delayed its publication.

[1] Conington on the "Moral Essays."

[2] Harte, James Miller, and Spence were all feeble writers, who were spared Pope's lash because they had written in praise of himself.

On February 8 Pope sent a copy of the Epistle to Ladyholt, with a letter in which he says :

"The lady to whom it is addressed had the great modesty to insist on my suppressing her name ; so I must leave you, with the rest of the world, to guess at her. It is certain there are not many who can justly claim the character. I know her to merit it, and so do, or should, all those that know her. Yet the malice of a world which abounds not in good examples would perhaps be glad she did not, for, unless a lady be in some public station, it is nobody's vanity to be her friend, and few women are friends but out of vanity. Virtue's retirement is either not allowed, or not seen."

In the Advertisement to the first edition the poet stated, "upon his honour," that no character was taken from real life. This first version was much shorter than the later ones, and did not contain the three characters of Atossa (Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough), Philomede (Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough), or Chloe (Lady Suffolk). Therefore the assertion that there were no characters taken from real life may have been true, except as regarded the complimentary portrait of Martha Blount. But the poem must here be dealt with in its final form, as it appeared after the poet's death.

Pope has constantly been credited with the saying that most women have no character at all, but we find, from the opening lines of the Epistle, that the dictum was Martha Blount's. Martha, it may be gathered, was something of a "man's woman," and did not particularly care for the society of her own sex. Thus the poet begins :

Nothing so true as what you once let fall:
"Most women have no characters at all."
Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
And best distinguished by black, brown, or fair.

Then follows a brilliant description of the various attitudes or disguises in which a fashionable lady of the period might be painted (after the allegorical manner introduced by Lely): Pastora, Leda, Magdalen, or St. Cecilia. He too will emulate the painter, and show woman playing various parts.

Whether the charmer sinner it or saint it,
If folly grow romantic, I must paint it.
Come then, the colours and the ground prepare,
Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air:
Choose a firm cloud before it fall, and in it
Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of this minute.

First there is Rufa (possibly the youthful Lady Walpole),[1] who combines a love of gallantry with a love of philosophy, and alternately studies Locke and flirts with some light, gay meteor of a spark. Such learning as ill agrees with frivolity—

As Sappho's [2] diamonds with her dirty smock;
Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,
With Sappho fragrant at an evening mask.

[1] Margaret, daughter and heiress of Samuel Rolle, of Haynton, Devon. She was married at 14 (in 1724) to Robert, eldest son of Sir Robert Walpole. He had been created Baron Walpole in 1725. Lady Walpole was a woman of notorious reputation, but she had some intellect, and was better read than most ladies of the fashion. There are numerous references to her in Horace Walpole's letters.

[2] Sappho was, of course, intended for Lady Mary Wortley, who tried to restore her fading beauty, though she was careless about her dress.

Then there is Silia, who storms and rages because she has a pimple on her nose; and Papilla, who yearns for a park, but, as soon as the park is purchased, dissolves into tears on account of "the odious, odious trees"; and Narcissa,[1] whose nature, tolerably mild, "To make a wash would hardly stew a child"; and Philomede,[2] who "sins with poets through pure love of wit"; and Flavia, who has too much sense to pray:

> Nor asks of God, but of her stars, to give
> The mighty blessing, "while we live, to live."
> Then all for death, that opiate of the soul,
> Lucretia's dagger, Rosamunda's bowl.[3]

The famous character of Atossa, generally applied to the Duchess of Marlborough, was not published till after the poet's death. Report said that the duchess bribed him to suppress the character, but he had prepared it for publication in Warburton's edition of his "Works." It was written, however, in so ambiguous a style that it was almost equally applicable to the Duchess of Buckingham. There is a tradition that Pope had the temerity to read the passage in manuscript to each duchess as the character of the other. A few lines from this remarkable satire may be quoted. After alluding

[1] Warton had been told that Narcissa was intended for the Duchess of Hamilton.

[2] Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, who was devotedly attached to Congreve, and raised a monument to him in Westminster Abbey. She died in 1733.

[3] This may be an allusion to Lady Lechmere, daughter of Lord Howard, who made, according to the gossip of the day, an unsuccessful attempt to poison herself, in consequence of her heavy losses at cards.

to the inconsistencies of his other female contemporaries, the poet asks :

> But what are these to great Atossa's mind ?
> Scarce once herself, by turns all womankind !
> Who, with herself, or others, from her birth
> Finds all her life one warfare upon earth ;
> Shines in exposing knaves and painting fools,
> Yet is whate'er she hates and ridicules.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Strange ! by the means defeated of the ends,
> By spirit robbed of power, by warmth of friends,
> By wealth of followers ! without one distress,
> Sick of herself through very selfishness !

Lady Suffolk is described in the character of Chloe, who has every pleasing and every prudent quality, but lacks a heart.

> She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought,
> But never, never reached one generous thought.

Your secrets are safe with Chloe, but you will never hear one of hers, and even when she sees her friend in deep despair she is able to observe "how much a chintz exceeds mohair."

> Of all her dears she never slandered one,
> But cares not if a thousand are undone.
> Would Chloe know if you're alive or dead ?
> She bids her footman put it in her head.[1]

Having observed that in men various ruling passions are found, the poet asserts that in women, two only divide the sex.

> The love of pleasure and the love of sway.

[1] Warton records that Pope, being at dinner with Lady Suffolk one night, heard her tell her footman to remind her to inquire on the morrow for Mrs. Blount, who was ill.

Men, some to business, some to pleasure take;
But every woman is at heart a rake.
Men, some to quiet, some to public strife;
But every lady would be queen for life.

As we have seen in "The Rape of the Lock" and other poems, Pope's ideal woman was chiefly distinguished by good-humour tempered by good sense, and in his concluding passage on the perfect woman he dwells entirely on the charm of an unvarying amiability. The ideal is blessed with a temper—

Whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day.

. . . . .

Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
Yet has her humour most when she obeys.
Let fops or fortune fly which way they will,
Disdains all loss of tickets or codille;
Spleen, vapours, or small-pox, above them all,
And mistress of herself though china fall.

The conclusion, though in effect a repetition of the charges of inconsistency already levelled against women, is twisted into a kind of compliment to the sex in general, and an immortal tribute to Patty in particular.

And yet, believe me, good as well as ill,
Woman's at best a contradiction still.
Heaven, when it strives to polish all it can
Its last best work, but forms a softer man.
Picks from each sex, to make the favourite blest,
Your love of pleasure, our desire of rest;
Blends, in exception to all general rules,
Your taste of follies, with our scorn of fools;
Reserve with frankness, art with truth allied,
Courage with softness, modesty with pride;
Fixed principles, with fancy ever new:
Shakes this together, and produces—you!

Be this a woman's fame; with this unblest,
Toasts live a scorn, and beauties die a jest.
This Phœbus promised (I forget the year)
When those blue eyes first opened on our sphere.
Ascendant Phœbus watched that hour with care,
Averted half your parents' simple prayer;
And gave you beauty, but denied the pelf
That buys your sex a tyrant o'er itself.
The generous god who wit and gold refines,
And ripens spirits, as he ripens mines,
Kept dross for duchesses—the world shall know it—
To you gave sense, good-humour, and a poet.

Bolingbroke, as we have seen, regarded the "Characters of Women" as the finest of the satires, and his opinion was shared by Johnson, though not by modern critics. Exquisite as is the technique of the work, brilliant as are the satires, it was an error of judgment for a poet who had undertaken to write about women's characters to begin by denying that most women had any character at all. With this belief in his mind, he was compelled to create a museum of monstrosities—to write a chapter of fabulous mythology. He cannot even agree with himself, for, having denied women characters, he says (in a note) that their characters are more various than those of men. He puts forward a series of lampoons as genuine portraits. "There is no truth in Pope's satiric sketches of women—not even colourable truth; but if there were, how frivolous, how hollow, to erect into solemn monumental protestations against the whole female sex, what turn out to be pure casual eccentricities, or else personal idiosyncrasies, or else foibles shockingly exaggerated!"[1]

[1] De Quincey.

CHAPTER XLVII

1735

The Literary Correspondence of Mr. Pope

THE concluding line of the "Epistle to a Lady"—

> To you gave sense, good-humour, and a poet—

led certain persons to believe that Pope was about to be married to Miss Blount. To one of these matter-of-fact friends Pope wrote:

"Your other question about intending marriage made me laugh: for if that line meant any such thing it must be over. It is in the preterperfect tense, 'gave a poet' (?). It is a new sort of father for marriage: he gave me long ago to Belinda, as he did Homer to Achilles, and it is a mercy he has not given me to more ladies, but that I am almost as little inclined to celebrate that way as the other."

In the course of this letter, the poet once again denies (by implication) the authorship of the "Sober Advice from Horace." The name of the great Bentley had been affixed to the notes,[1] and

[1] A most tasteless and unmannerly joke on the part of Pope, since the notes were both dull and indecent. In an anonymous letter to Mr. Pope, it was said that "to forge a note under Dr.

Bentley the younger was thirsting to avenge his father.

"The ludicrous, or, if you please, the obscure thing you desire me to send you," explains Pope, "I did not approve of, and therefore do not care to propagate by sending it into the country at all. Whoever likes it so well as to think it mine, compliments me at my own expense. . . . The story of Bentley is this, in three words.

"He expressed a resentment, as if I had injured his father in a thing I disowned. I told him, if he was not satisfied in that, and if he required any other satisfaction, I would give it. After a three weeks' hesitation and messages, he gave it under his own hand that he did not, and confessed himself in the wrong."

To all appearance, the poet was very innocently employed at this time in seeing the quarto edition of his poetical works through the press, and in making improvements in his little domain. "My garden," he writes to Fortescue on March 23, "is in good condition, and promises fruits not too early. I am building a stone obelisk, making two new ovens and stoves, and a hothouse for ananas, of which I hope you will taste this year." [1]

Bentley's hand, and set his name to it, was of the same nature as Sir P. Strange's crime, and ought to be expiated by the loss of ears.

[1] These hot-house stoves had been introduced from Germany. When the Wortley Montagus visited Hanover in the winter of 1716 they were astonished at the ripe fruits, oranges, lemons, and ananas (or pine-apples) that they saw on the king's table. Lady Mary discovered that the Germans had brought their stoves to such perfection that they could lengthen the summer as long as they pleased. They gave to each plant the degree of heat it would

Earlier in the month, however, Pope had sent a significant request to Lord Oxford that the bound book containing copies of his letters might be lent him for a day or two, as he desired to examine it. But the book was never returned, and the reason for the request soon became apparent. Pope's ruling passion, as we have seen, was to appear before the world as a man of exalted morality—benevolent, honourable, open-hearted—in short, as the typical "honest man," whom he described as "the noblest work of God." A certain amount of the mud thrown by the Dunces was bound to stick, and he desired to follow up the brilliant poetical *Apologia* in the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot" by an unmistakable proof that he was not only the first poet of the day, but that he likewise was a guileless, kindly man in private life. He had always prided himself, as we know, on his epistolary talent, and he was inordinately proud of his friendships. He desired that all the world should know the terms of intimacy on which he lived with persons of rank and fashion, as well as writers of genius. It would have been an almost unheard-of thing, at that period, for a man to publish his own private correspondence, but Curll was well known to be on the look-out for letters—the more confidential the better—from eminent hands, and quite unscrupulous in the methods by which he obtained them. Here was a willing tool, ready to the poet's hand. He laid an ingenious plot by which he

receive from the sun in its native soil. "The effect is very near the same," she remarks; "I am surprised we do not practise in England so useful an invention."

could obtain the surreptitious publication of his correspondence, pay off an old score against his enemy, and win the sympathy of the public as the innocent victim of a rascally bookseller.

The pit had been dug some eighteen months before. In November 1733 a mysterious person signing himself "P. T." had written to Curll, who had advertised for information about Pope's family for a catchpenny life of the poet that he proposed to publish. P. T. explained that he had been intimately acquainted with the elder Pope,[1] and gave an account of his character and career, which was substantially the same as that given in the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot." P. T. also stated that he possessed a collection of Pope's original letters, which would be sufficient to make a four or five-shilling book, and for these he was asking no more than would pay the transcriber. He made it a condition of publication, however, that Curll should print an advertisement of the correspondence, and thus render himself responsible for the work. Curll took no further steps in the matter till March 1735, when, moved by some mysterious impulse, he sent P. T.'s advertisement to Pope, with a suggestion that they should meet and make up their differences.

Pope replied by an advertisement in three journals (*Daily Post-boy*, *Daily Journal*, and *Grub Street Journal*) to the effect that "Whereas A. P. hath received a letter from E. C., bookseller, pretending that a person, the initials of whose name are P. T., hath offered the said E. C. to print a large collection

[1] It has been supposed that Savage wrote the letters signed P. T.

of Mr. P.'s Letters, to which E. C. requires an answer, A. P. having never had, nor intending to have, any private correspondence with the said E. C., gives it him in this manner: That he knows no such person as P. T., that he believes he hath no such collection, and that he thinks the whole a forgery, and shall not trouble himself at all about it."

Curll, enraged at the insulting tone of this announcement, published a reply, in which he stated that he had never proposed to carry on any private correspondence with Mr. Pope, but had been directed to give him notice of the whereabouts of these letters. The originals were in his own possession, and could be inspected by any persons interested in the controversy.[1] On seeing this advertisement, the mysterious P. T. wrote to reproach Curll with having betrayed him to "Squire Pope," but added that he had printed the letters at his own expense, and would give Curll the privilege of publishing them if he would undertake to pay for the paper and printing. He agreed to sell six hundred and fifty copies at three pounds a score, seventy-five pounds to be paid down. Curll accepted the proposal,[2] and it was arranged that a business interview between the principals should take place on a certain day. P. T., however, cancelled the appointment on the ground that Pope might send some Twickenham bravoes to assault him. At this point Curll began to smell a rat, for how should

[1] P. T. had stated that the originals were in his possession, and this was enough for Curll.

[2] He eventually paid £60 for 600 copies.

Pope have known of the appointment unless he were in the confidence of P. T.?

It was next proposed that a gentleman, described as R. S., should call at Curll's house one evening at eight o'clock, and reopen the business on behalf of P.T. Accordingly, on May 7, to quote from Curll's "Narrative of the Transaction," "R. S., a short, squat man, came to my house, not at eight, but near ten at night. He had on a clergyman's gown, and his neck was surrounded with a large lawn barrister's band. He showed me a book in sheets, almost finished, and about a dozen original letters, and promised me the whole at our next meeting."

R. S. gave his name as Smythe, and professed to be a clergyman hailing from Southwark.[1] But there were yet more initials in the background. It was stated that an old gentleman of quality, described as E. P., was the real owner of the letters and instigator of their publication, whereas P. T. and R. S. were merely his emissaries. However that might be, Smythe arranged to meet Curll at a tavern in Leicester Fields, whither two porters brought a horse laden with five bundles of books. Twenty-five pounds was paid in advance for the load, which was sent on to the bookseller's house. On May 12 Curll published the following advertisement in *The Post-boy*:

"This day are published, and most beautifully printed, price five shillings, Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence for thirty years, from 1704 to 1734.

[1] This part is said to have been played by James Worsdale, a painter, who had been servant to Sir Godfrey Kneller. He was on the stage for a time, and was an excellent mimic.

Being a Collection of Letters, regularly digested, and written by him to the Late Earl of Halifax, Earl of Burlington, Secretary Craggs, Sir William Trumbull, Honourable J. C[aryll], Hon. Robert Digby, Esq., Hon. Edward Blount, Esq., Mr. Addison, Mr. Congreve, Mr. Wycherley, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Steele, Mr. Gay, Mr. Jervas, Dr. Arbuthnot, Dean Berkeley, Dean Parnell, etc. Also letters from Mr. Pope to Mrs. Arabella Fermor, and many other ladies. With the respective answers of each correspondent. Printed for E. Curll, in Rose Street, Covent Garden, and sold by all booksellers. N.B.—The original manuscripts, of which affidavit is made, may be seen at Mr. Curll's house by all who desire it."

The last clause was a bit of bluff, for on the same day Curll was writing to Smythe to beg him to send the manuscripts and the remainder of the promised volumes, as less than three hundred out of the six hundred and fifty had been supplied. Curll's bluff was answered by an even bolder piece of bluff on the part of Mr. Pope. He persuaded his friend, Lord Islay, to call the attention of the House of Lords to the fact that letters from peers were included in the collection.[1] The Lords took up the matter, the edition was seized, and Curll was ordered to attend before the House. But when the collection was examined it was found that it contained no letter from a peer, and the volumes were returned to Curll, who proceeded with the sale. Pope then advertised that he would pay a reward of twenty

[1] To publish letters written by a peer without his consent was a breach of privilege.

guineas to any of the initialled persons who would discover the whole of the plot; or, if any of the said persons could prove that he had acted by the direction of another, he should receive a double reward. Curll replied that he and the gentleman of the initials would be very happy to oblige Mr. Pope in this matter if he would make it better worth their while.[1]

On May 12 Pope wrote to a friend, who had often reproached him with being a bad correspondent, and apologised for his long silence.

"But what makes me sick of writing," he pleads, "is the shameless industry of such fellows as Curll, and the idle ostentation or weak partiality of many of my correspondents, who have shown about my letters (which I never writ but in haste, and generally against the grain, in mere civility, for almost all letters are impertinent farther than *Si vales, bene est; ego valeo*) to such a degree that a volume of two hundred or more are printed by that rascal. But he could never have injured me this way, had not my friends furnished him with the occasion by keeping such wretched papers as they ought to have burned."

As Pope had insisted on having his letters returned, and had taken the trouble to have them copied, and the copy safely deposited in Lord Oxford's library, the ostentation did not lie with his correspondents.[2] Curll, who had quarrelled with

[1] Curll afterwards claimed that he was entitled to forty guineas, as he had proved that Pope himself was at the bottom of the plot.

[2] Swift, writing to Lady Betty Germain on June 8, says: "I detest the House of Lords for their indulgence to such a profligate,

his initialled correspondents over questions of payment, imperfect copies, and so forth, was now convinced that the poet himself was at the bottom of the whole affair. He announced a new edition of Mr. Pope's "Literary Correspondence," with a supplement containing all the letters he had received from P. T. and R. S.

On the appearance of this threat, copies of the documents relating to the transaction were sent by Pope to another bookseller, Cooper, who published them under the title of "A True Narrative of the Method by which Mr. Pope's Private Letters were procured by Edmund Curll, Bookseller."

A letter from Curll to Pope, which only the poet could have furnished, was printed in the Narrative, which concluded with the statement that "the original letters of Mr. Pope, with the post-marks upon them, remain still in the books from which they were copied, and so many omissions and interpolations have been made in this publication as to render it impossible for Mr. P. to own them in the condition they appear."

Curll followed the "True Narrative" with his "Initial Correspondence," in which he gives his own version of the affair. He also addressed a preliminary Epistle to Pope in the second volume of the so-called "Literary Correspondence." In this he recapitulates the poet's sins against him, beginning with the poisoning episode, and adds that P. T. has

prostitute villain as Curll; but am at a loss how he could procure any letters written to Mr. Pope; although, by the vanity or indiscretions of correspondents, the rogue might have picked up some that went from him."

been discovered to be Trickster Pope, and R. S. Silly Rascal.

"Pray, most sincere sir," he asks, "how could either P. T. or R. S. come by the letter I wrote to you, if A. P., R. S., and P. T. were not all of a clan? Who was it played the gardener—sure it could not be honest Searle?[1]—in lopping some branches, inoculating others, and transplanting a large shoot from one of your letters to Mr. Cromwell, and grafting it on Mr. Walsh's stock? . . .

"Ananias and Sapphira felt the divine vengeance for one lie; what, then, do your confederates expect, or justly ought to dread, for so many as have been told about the publication of your letters? The plot is now discovered. Lawton Gilliver had declared that you bought of him the remainder of the impression of Wycherley's letters, which he printed, by your direction, in 1728, and have printed six hundred of the additional letters, with those to Mr. Cromwell, to make up the volume.[2] Yet still it must be given out that a nobleman has been robbed, and his innocent servant must be discarded, to support your most flagrant falsehood. This, sir, is eating shame and drinking after it. Therefore, if you have any remorse of conscience, take Dr. Arbuthnot's last advice—study more to reform than to chastise, and begin with making yourself the precedent."

[1] John Searle, Pope's gardener.

[2] The printed sheets supplied by P. T. to Curll were partly made up from the volume of Wycherley correspondence, and by an oversight a note referring to "the present edition of the posthumous works of Mr. Wycherley" was allowed to remain in the Curll volume.

The "Correspondence of Mr. Pope," thanks partly to the magnificent advertisement it had received, was the literary sensation of the year, and the whole town was ringing with the praises of the virtue and benevolence therein displayed. The public in general did not follow, or did not understand, the details of the controversy between the poet and Curll. They knew, however, that Curll was an unscrupulous rascal, and they believed that the excellent Mr. Pope was an ill-used man. Everything promised well for the publication of an authorised version of the correspondence, the object that Pope had been striving for, the *raison d'être* of all his elaborate plots and stratagems. On June 17 he wrote to inform Lord Oxford that he had just learnt of an excellent machine of Curll's to graft a lie upon, "to make me seem more concerned than I was in the affair of the letters. It is so artful a one, that I longed to tell it to you. Not that I will enter into any controversy with such a dog. . . .[1] But I believe it will occasion a thing you will not be sorry for, relating to the Bishop of Rochester's letters and papers."

On July 15 Pope advertised in *The London Gazette* that whereas several booksellers had printed surreptitious and incorrect copies of his letters, and whereas there were daily advertisements of such letters, he thought himself obliged to publish, with all convenient speed, such of the said letters as were genuine, with the addition of others of a less

[1] Lord Oxford knew as well as Pope himself that a heated controversy had been carried on in the public journals between the poet and the "dog."

insignificant nature. The authorised correspondence did not, however, appear till 1737. The delay may be explained by the fact that Pope had "connived," to use his own word, at the publication of an edition by Cooper of the original P. T. version, which had caused all the "bother."[1] Apparently, the alleged omissions, interpolations, and inaccuracies could be viewed with complacency as long as the author himself was profiting by the sales.

[1] Curll was extremely angry at this proceeding, and tried to get an injunction against Cooper.

CHAPTER XLVIII

1735

Quarto Edition of the Poems—Last Days with Lord Peterborough—Oxford, and Spence—Swift's Failing Health—Correspondence—Death of Peterborough

IN the course of the summer Pope brought out the quarto edition of his "Poetical Works."[1] In July he sent a copy to Caryll, with a letter in which he says that Mrs. Patty has been his neighbour for some days at Marble Hill, as she was staying with the newly married couple, Lady Suffolk and Mr. Berkeley.

"I intend ere long," he adds, "to take a little ramble, and stay three weeks with a friend whom I have known ten years, without writing three letters to, and shall probably never write another to, yet esteem as much as any friend he has—I mean Lord Cobham."[2] This shockingly constructed sentence

[1] The second and fourth "Satires of Dr. Donne" were published in this edition, versified and modernised by Pope. The fourth satire does not seem to have been printed before, but the second had been printed in 1733 under the title of "The Impertinent; or, a Visit to the Court." It was evidently intended to apply to Lord Hervey.

[2] This is the last published letter from Pope to Caryll, who died on April 6, 1736.

was evidently intended for a hit at poor Caryll, who was inclined to think himself neglected if his illustrious friend failed to write to him or to visit him at stated intervals.

Pope had made the acquaintance of his ardent admirer, Lord Orrery, in the autumn of 1733, and a fairly regular correspondence was now being carried on between the pair. The poet was endeavouring to persuade Swift to return his letters, and he fancied that in Orrery he might find a useful tool. On July 12 Pope wrote to thank his lordship for sending a good account of the dean's health.

"I am just losing," he explains, "perhaps have this moment lost, my Lord Peterborough. And Lord Bolingbroke, whom I have loved longer than any man now living, is gone away. And another whom I had just begun to love, whose character I had some years esteemed, and whom I find I must love if he and I live, for there is no helping it, though I am weary of loving and taking leases when the life is almost run out—another lord, I say, whose name I dare not tell you, is to stay a year in Ireland."

Pope cautiously alludes to the malicious reports about him, and says that he is not quite at the bottom of the business, but finds that a certain person had contributed to that suspicion (of instigating the printing of the letters) by exceeding a commission that had been given him, not so much by Pope himself as by his friends. If he proved absolutely guilty it would be necessary for the poet to be merciful and screen him, or he would never discover the whole of it. This is the only hint at

a line of defence which Pope evidently contemplated, but was compelled to drop for want of evidence. It was good enough to satisfy Lord Orrery, no doubt, but a direct denial of all complicity was found to be the best course when the authorised edition of the "Letters" was published.

In August Pope was at Bevis Mount with the dying Lord Peterborough. On August 25 he wrote the following interesting account of the situation in which he found his famous host to Patty Blount, who was still with the newly married couple at Marble Hill:

"I found my Lord Peterborough on his couch, where he gave me an account of the excessive sufferings he had passed through, with a weak voice, but spirited. He talked of nothing but the great amendment of his condition, and of finishing the building and gardens for his best friend to enjoy after him;[1] that he had one care more when he went to France, which was to give a true account to posterity of some parts of history in Queen Anne's reign, which Burnet had scandalously misrepresented; and of some others, to justify her against the imputation of intending to bring in the Pretender, which (to his knowledge) neither her ministers, Oxford and Bolingbroke, nor she, had any design to do. He next told me, he had ended his domestic affairs, through such difficulties from the law that gave him as much torment of the mind as his distemper had done of body to do right to the person to whom he had obligations beyond expression: that he had found it necessary

[1] His wife, Anastasia Robinson, the famous singer.

to declare his marriage to all his relations, but (since the person who had married them was dead), to remarry her in the church at Bristol, before witnesses. . . .[1]

"I lay in the next room to him, where I found he was awake, and calling for help most hours of the night, sometimes crying out for pain. In the morning he got up at nine, and was carried into his garden in a chair: he fainted away twice there. He fell about twelve into a violent pang, which made his limbs all shake, and his teeth chatter; and for some time he lay cold as death. His wound was dressed (which is done constantly four times a day), and he grew gay, and sat down to dinner with ten people. After this he was in torment again for a quarter of an hour, and, as soon as the pang was over, was carried again into the garden to the workmen, talked again of his history, and declaimed with great spirit against the meanness of the present great men and ministers, and the decay of the public spirit and honour. It is im-

[1] Lord Peterborough had married Mrs. Robinson as early as 1723, but had kept the affair a secret, though he constituted himself her champion and protector. Senesino, her colleague, was forced to declare, on his knees, that Anastasia was a nonpareil of beauty and virtue. Lord Stanhope joked about her, and was challenged for his pains. "The whole town," to quote Lady Mary Wortley's description, "is divided into parties on this important point. Innumerable have been the disorders between the two sexes on so great an account, besides half the house of peers being put under arrest. By the providence of Heaven, and the wise care of his Majesty, no bloodshed ensued. However, things are now tolerably accommodated, and the fair lady rides through the town in triumph in the shining berlin of her hero, not to reckon the essential advantage of £100 a month, which it is said he allows her." All this happened in 1724, and Lady Peterborough had to wait eleven years before her lord would acknowledge the marriage.

possible to conceive how much his heart is above his condition; he is dying every other hour, and obstinate to do whatever he has a mind to. He has concerted no measures beforehand for his journey, but to get a yacht in which he will sail, but no place fixed on to reside at, nor has determined what place to land at, or provided any accommodation for his going on land. He talks of getting towards Lyons, but undoubtedly he can never travel but to the seashore. I pity the poor woman who is to share in all he suffers, and who can in no one thing persuade him to spare himself. . . . He has with him day after day, not only all his relations, but every creature of the town of Southampton that pleases. He lies on his couch, and receives them though he says little. When his pains come he desires them to walk out, but invites them to stay and dine or sup. . . . Nothing can be more affecting and melancholy to me than what I see here: yet he takes my visit so kindly that I should have lost one great pleasure had I not come. I have nothing more to say, as I have nothing in my mind but this present object, which indeed is extraordinary. This man was never born to die like other men, any more than to live like them."

A brief visit was paid to Oxford in September, where Joseph Spence[1] was then Professor of Poetry. Writing to his mother on September 4, Spence says:

[1] Joseph Spence (1699–1768) had written an Essay in praise of Pope's translation of the "Odyssey," and had thus attracted the favourable attention of the poet. He Boswellised Pope, with the result that he left a manuscript collection of valuable anecdotes, which was published in 1820.

"Monday last, after dinner, I was lolling at a coffee-house half asleep, and half reading something about Prince Eugene and the armies on the Rhine, when a ragged boy of an ostler came in to me with a little scrap of paper, not half an inch broad, which contained the following words: 'Mr. Pope would be very glad to see Mr. Spence at the Cross Inn just now.' You may imagine how pleased I was, and that I hobbled thither as fast as my spindle-spanks would carry me. There I found him, quite fatigued to death, with a thin face lengthened at least two inches beyond its usual appearance. He had been to take his last leave of Lord Peterborough, and came away in a chariot of his lordship's that holds but one person, for quick travelling. When he was got within about three miles of Oxford, coming down a hill in Bagley Wood, he saw two gentlemen and a lady sitting in distress by the way-side. Near them lay a chaise overturned and half broken to pieces; in the fall of which the poor lady had her arm broke. Mr. Pope had the goodness to stop and offer her his chariot to carry her to Oxford for help; and so walked the three miles in the very midst of a close sultry day, and came in dreadfully fatigued. An inn, though designed for a place of rest, is but ill suited to a man that's really tired; so I prevailed on him to go to my room, where I got him a little dinner, and where he enjoyed himself for two or three hours; and set out in the evening, as he was obliged to do, for Colonel Dormer's, on his way to Lord Cobham's, which was to be the end of his journey."

Bolingbroke returned to France this autumn after the failure of his attempts to undermine the power of Walpole through the help of the Opposition leaders and the anti-ministerial Whigs. The quarrels between the king and Frederick, Prince of Wales, had added to Walpole's difficulties, and the prince was chosen by the Opposition as their figure-head, it being hoped that he would carry out in his own person Bolingbroke's ideal of the Patriot King. The discontented Whigs—Pulteney, Cobham, Marchmont, Burlington, and others—came over to the Opposition, which was further strengthened by the infusion of young blood in the persons of Lyttelton, Cornbury, and the Grenvilles, who were termed the "boy patriots." Bolingbroke realised that he was a source of embarrassment to his party, but he left them a valuable legacy in the shape of the interest and sympathy of Pope. The poet, as we have seen, had hitherto stood outside the sphere of active politics, but he could not resist the flattery of a powerful party and a young prince, and it was at this time that he allowed himself to be drawn within the charmed circle. The first allusion to attentions from Frederick occurs in a letter to Lord Bathurst, dated October 8. Pope professes an ardent longing for Bathurst's return to town. In an almost infantine strain he writes:

"Your lordship is almost my only prop," he writes. "Two of those with whom my soul rested and leaned upon are gone out of the kingdom this summer.[1] Every one that makes life enjoyable to

[1] Bolingbroke and Peterborough.

me is gone. . . . I was three days since surprised by a favour of his royal highness—an unexpected visit of four or five hours. I ought not to omit telling you that, on sight of your picture, he spoke in high, just terms of you, and expressed great personal affection; I thought so very remarkably, that I found it the best topic for me to make my court to."

Swift's health, or rather his mind, was rapidly failing, and he was depressed at the loss of two of his old friends. Arbuthnot had followed Gay in February of this year, and Lady Masham had died a couple of months earlier. On September 3 the dean wrote to Pope in answer to a complaint about the dangers that now threatened private correspondence.

"You need not fear," he says, "any consequence in the commerce that has so long passed between us, although I never destroyed one of your letters. But my executors are men of honour and virtue, who have strict orders in my will to burn every letter left behind me. Neither did our letters contain any turns of wit, or fancy, or politics, or satire, but mere innocent friendship. Yet I am loth that my letters, from you and a very few other friends, should die before me. I believe we neither of us ever leaned our head upon our left hand to study what we should write next. . . ."

A little later, in answer apparently to a further appeal from Pope, the dean says that his letters have escaped being published because he wrote nothing but nature and friendship, and particular

incidents which could make no figure in writing. He had observed that not only Voiture, but likewise Pliny and Tully, wrote their letters more for the public view than for the sake of their correspondents.

"You need not apprehend," he concludes, "any Curlls meddling with your letters to me—I will not destroy them, but have ordered my executors to do that office."

Pope displayed a great deal of anxiety about Swift's condition at this time, partly out of genuine friendship, no doubt, but partly from a fear that his precious letters would be burnt. He told Lord Orrery (October 8) that he seldom heard from the dean, and seldom wrote to him.

"It tears too much out of my heart; and when I have said all I can, it is nothing, it is impotence, it is one short sigh. . . . I almost wish I had never seen him. I hear his whole thoughts of late are turned to charities and provisions for the helpless and indigent. Ten such clergymen would save a whole nation, would save a whole bench of bishops."

Lord Peterborough sailed for Lisbon in October, but died on the voyage.[1] Pope sent Swift a brief account of his last meeting with his dying friend. "No body," he said, "could be more wasted, and no soul could be more alive. Immediately after the severest operation . . . he took coach, and got from Bristol to Southampton. This is a man that will neither live nor die like any other mortal. Poor Lord Peterborough! there is another string

[1] He was about seventy-six years of age.

lost that would have helped to draw you hither. He ordered, on his death-bed, his watch to be given me (that which had accompanied him in all his travels) with this reason, 'that I might have something to put me every day in mind of him.'"

CHAPTER XLIX

1736

Illness—Proposals for Printing the "Correspondence"—Ralph Allen—Bevis Mount—Melancholy Letters from Swift—Friendship with Lyttelton

POPE was seriously ill in the early part of this year, and was obliged to stay for a time with the famous surgeon, Cheselden, in order to be under regular treatment. Lord Orrery had read alarming reports about the poet's health, and on January 20 he wrote to Mrs. Cæsar:

"I am under great anxiety about Mr. Pope. The newspapers declare him dangerously ill. Pray Heaven they lie as usual, and have no better authority than they had for burying me in Westminster Abbey. Yet I cannot help being extremely uneasy. There are a thousand reasons why he should be sick, nay, why he should die, and therefore I tremble for him. If it is possible, be so good as to ease my fears, and send me with joy to see the Dean of St. Patrick's. Spell the good news never so ill, I promise you I shall find it out." [1]

[1] From the unpublished MS.

Swift, too, had heard the rumours, and wrote an anxious letter of inquiry, begging to be put out of suspense as soon as possible. The dean gave a melancholy account of his own health. His giddiness was more or less constant, and he had not an ounce of flesh between skin and bone. He was sleeping ill, moreover, and had a poor appetite.

"I can as easily write a poem in the Chinese language as my own," he complains. "I am as fit for matrimony as for invention; and yet I have daily schemes for innumerable essays in prose, and proceed sometimes to no less than half a dozen lines, which the next morning become waste paper."

The "Epistle to Augustus," which was not to be published till the following year, had been sent to Swift in manuscript. He was delighted with the allusion to himself, which, he said, would do him the greatest honour he would ever receive from posterity, and outweigh the malignity of ten thousand enemies. These are the lines in question, which very nearly brought a prosecution upon the poet:

> Let Ireland tell, how wit upheld her cause,
> Her trade supported,[1] and supplied her laws;
> And leave on Swift this grateful verse engraved,
> The rights a Court attacked, a poet saved.[2]

[1] Swift advocated the use by the Irish of their own manufactures.

[2] The reference is to the "Drapier Letters," in which the dean attacked the granting of a patent to William Wood for coining halfpence. He aroused so much popular feeling by means of these pamphlets that the scheme had to be dropped.

> Behold the hand that wrought a nation's cure,
> Stretched to relieve the idiot and the poor,[1]
> Proud vice to brand, or injured worth adorn,
> And stretch the ray to ages yet unborn.

In addition to this splendid compliment, Pope promised that, if he ever finished another epistle in verse, it should be addressed to Swift. He had long concerted it, and even begun it, "but I would make what bears your name as finished as my last work ought to be; that is to say, more finished than any of the rest." His understanding, he feels, is extended rather than diminished, and he sees things more consistently, more as a whole. "But what I gain on the side of philosophy I lose on the side of poetry: the flowers are gone when the fruits begin to ripen, and the fruits perhaps will never ripen perfectly. The climate, under our heaven of a court, is cold and uncertain."

With a magnificent hospitality, he invited Swift to resign his deanery and pass his declining years at Twickenham. The offer was more prudent than it sounds, since Pope must have been perfectly well aware that it would never be accepted.

"I could keep you," boasts the poet, "for I am rich; that is, I have more than I want. I can afford room for yourself and two servants; I have indeed room enough, nothing but myself at home. The kind and hearty housewife is dead! the agreeable and instructive neighbour gone![2] Yet my house is enlarged, and the gardens extend and

[1] Swift helped to found an institution for the maintenance of idiots. He also tried to organise the numerous beggars of Dublin by making them wear a badge.

[2] Bolingbroke.

flourish, as knowing nothing of the guests they have lost. I have more fruit-trees and kitchen-garden than you have any thought of; nay, I have good melons and pine-apples of my own growth. I am as much a better gardener as I am a worse poet, than when you saw me; but gardening is near akin to philosophy. . . . For God's sake, why should not you (that are a step higher than a philosopher—a divine, yet have too much grace and wit to be a bishop[1]) e'en give all you have to the poor of Ireland (for whom you have already done everything else), so quit the place, and live and die with me?"

The proposals for printing by subscription an authorised edition of the famous "Correspondence" were issued in the course of the spring. Pope pretends, in a letter to Fortescue, that he is forced to publish this edition because "people have misunderstood an advertisement I printed some time ago, merely to put some stop to that rascal's books, as a promise that I would publish such a book. It is therefore offered in this manner; but I shall be just as well satisfied (if the public will) without performing the offer."

Pope could not yet bring himself to admit that he was voluntarily publishing his own letters, and he declared that he heartily wished the subscriptions would fall short. There seemed to be a good prospect that this wish would be fulfilled. The

[1] Swift, in the days of his power, did not think that he had too much grace and wit for a bishop. He was eager for promotion to the episcopal bench, but it was Queen Anne's prejudice against him on account of his unclerical writings that stood between him and advancement.

vogue of the letters was already over. The *succès de scandale* caused by the P. T. mystery and the appeal to the House of Lords died away when it was discovered that there was nothing indiscreet and very little of public interest in the correspondence.

One faithful admirer, however, thought that the transcendent virtue displayed in the letters rendered the book as good as many sermons, and desired that the revised and corrected edition should be published for the benefit of mankind. This was Ralph Allen, of Prior Park, near Bath, celebrated by Pope as the man who "did good by stealth and blushed to find it fame,"[1] and by Henry Fielding as Squire Allworthy. Allen was a man of obscure birth, who had made a large fortune as a post-office contractor, much of which he spent in charity. He had sought Pope's acquaintance after reading the "Correspondence," the fine sentiments therein set forth having imposed upon his simple mind. So anxious was the good man that the book should be reprinted that he offered to pay all expenses of the new edition, and Pope agreed that if the subscriptions fell short he would allow Allen to make up the deficit. Allen at this time was building a fine new house, and laying out elaborate grounds. Pope advised him about his gardens and

[1] Allen was the son of a Cornish innkeeper. He invented a system of cross-posts, which he farmed himself. His house was at Widcombe, four miles from Bath. Warburton said that Allen was, he believed, "the greatest private character in any age of the world." Hurd declared that Allen "comes up to the notion of my favourites of Queen Elizabeth's reign : good sense in conjunction with good manners."

From an engraving.

POPE IN HIS GARDEN AT TWICKENHAM.

PUBLIC LIBRARY

the decorations of his house, and received in return bottles of Bristol water and bits of spar for the Grotto.

Allen worked hard to promote the subscriptions for the quarto edition of the "Correspondence," which was to be known as "Mr. Pope's Prose Works," but guineas came in slowly and Pope evidently suspected that some of the subscribers were financed by his admirer. There is a volume of unpublished letters addressed by Pope to Allen in the British Museum,[1] from which some extracts may here be given. On July 18 the poet writes :

"I will allow you to remit the forty-five guineas which you say some of your friends have *really subscribed* ; and, to content you as far as I can, I will put the book to the press in three weeks' time, and determine to leave out every syllable, to the best of my judgment, that can give the least ill example to an age too apt to take it, or the least offence to any good or serious man. This being the point for which I have any sort of desire to publish the letters at all, is, I am persuaded, the chief point which makes you, in friendship to my character, so zealous about 'em. And, therefore, how small soever be the number so printed, provided I do not lose too much for a man of more prudence than fortune, I conclude that work will be done, and that end answered, were there but one or two hundred books in all. . . .

"I wish you life, peace, and contentment. For

[1] Out of eighty-one only eight have been published in their entirety. Of the remainder a few extracts were printed in Ruffhead's "Life of Pope," contributed no doubt by Warburton.

myself, if I live I desire nothing so much as to live in the good opinion of reasonable men."

Pope's travels were curtailed this year, on account of the feeble state of his health. He refused a pressing invitation to Lord Bathurst at Cirencester, and contented himself with a visit to Lady Peterborough in the late autumn. An accident which befel him about the end of August must have given a further shock to his frail constitution. Mrs. Pendarves, writing to Swift on September 2, says :

"I suppose you may have heard of Mr. Pope's accident, which had like to have proved a fatal one. He was leading a young lady into a boat, from his own stairs ; her foot missed the side of the boat, she fell into the water and pulled Mr. Pope after her ; the boat slipped away, and they were immediately out of their depth, and it was with some difficulty they were saved. The young lady's name is Talbot ; she is as remarkable for being a handsome woman as Mr. Pope is for wit. I think I cannot give you a higher notion of her beauty, unless I had named you instead of him."

On October 7 Pope was at his favourite Bevis Mount, and amusing himself by making new improvements in the grounds.

"This place is very pleasing to me," he writes to Allen, "both from the memory of what it has been in my lord's time, and what it is now. Here I live very much in my own way ; nor is the ease and enjoyment of it lessened, but advanced, by the employment of planting and improving many parts of it. To be *at ease* is the greatest of happiness (at ease, I mean, both of mind and body), but to

be idle is the greatest of unhappiness, both to the one and the other. . . .

"I propose, God willing, to be at home again by the 20th. I say God willing, on all accounts; but particularly now, when I fear the bad weather, and very bad way, which I am informed is about Basingstoke, may be difficult to me. And I must go the worst way, by that place, because I hope there to serve a friend. Adieu. These letters will never come into our collection, therefore let us commend ourselves honestly, when we do or suffer anything in a good cause. . . .

"I am employing much of your stone in the ornaments of this place. Pray tell me if it will do for paving a room very little frequented? I know it is rather too soft for any other paving."[1]

A little later he tells Allen that he is as busy planting for himself as he was lately for another, and thanks God for every wet day and every fog that gives him a headache but prospers his works.

The poet was back at Twickenham before November set in, and on the 2nd of that month he wrote to Bethel: "It was a very great pleasure to hear from you after a long intermission (for so I thought it) which partly my rambles, or intended rambles, occasioned. I put them off, with almost as much difficulty as I might have made them, and at the expense of writing letters in folio to Lord Bathurst about his plans.[2] I went only to South-

[1] From the unpublished MS.

[2] On August 14 Lord Bathurst had written to Pope enclosing a plan for a "classic temple" which he proposed to build in his grounds. He wanted Pope's advice about the fascias and cornice. He had also begun to level the hill in front of the house, and he

hampton, where the roads are good, the accommodation good, friends all the way, with a very valuable person to crown all the satisfaction of it. . . . Since my return, which has been but a fortnight, I have been much taken up with my book, which is half printed, and will be delivered by Lady Day next.

"[I have not taken any care more than I think decent, about saving myself harmless in the expense; nor do I see much taken; by none so much as yourself, I assure you hitherto, considering the sphere you move in. I have many awkwardnesses in it, and hate to speak of it; but really to no purpose I do it, but to *serve myself*, which is a motive I'm not used to make my *sole* one.]

"For all it can do is to show I disapprove many things I formerly thought and wrote, by my omitting them in this edition. And that no other value is to be set upon the rest, but as they are the marks of a plain mind and undesigning heart, is a serious truth; for considered as a *book*, it is nothing.

"I have so much and so little to say of Mrs. Patty Blount, that I wish you'd come and join with me in forcing her to set herself right. I am tired with good wishes for her, they are so ineffectual. Her virtues and her weaknesses go hand in hand; I don't know which are the greater. But every one who is her friend on account of the first must fret at the latter, since nothing can do her good for

tells Pope "an obelisk shall rise upon your orders to terminate the view." Lord Bathurst had complained to Lady Suffolk that Pope, when at Cirencester, in 1734, "instead of admiring, as he ought to do, what is already executed, is every day drawing me a plan for some new building or other, and then is violently angry that it is not set up the next morning."

want of her co-operation. She is very sensible of any true friendship at the same time that she disappoints any true friend. . . ."[1]

Swift had some attack in the autumn of this year that threatened his life, and even more, his reason. He recovered temporarily, however, and by December 2 he was able to send a long letter to Twickenham, in which he appears like his old self, though he complains that years and infirmities have completely broken him. He can neither read,[2] write, remember, nor converse. In fact, he can do nothing but walk and ride. He has hardly a friend left in the world except Pope, who, he declares, ought to write to him out of charity, without expecting an answer.

"My comfort is," he continues, "you began to distinguish so confounded early, that your acquaintance with distinguished men of all kinds was almost as ancient as mine. I mean Wycherley, Rowe, Prior, Congreve, Addison, Parnell, etc., and, in spite of your heart, you have owned me a contemporary; not to mention my Lords Oxford, Bolingbroke, Harcourt, Peterborough. In short, I was the other day recollecting twenty-seven great ministers, or men of wit and learning, who are all dead, and all of my acquaintance, within twenty years past. Neither have I the grace to be sorry that the present times are drawn to the dregs as well as my own

[1] Unpublished, except for the paragraph in brackets, which was printed by Ruffhead.

[2] The dean had a prejudice against spectacles. When his eyes grew dim he was deprived of the solace of reading, which he might have enjoyed some years longer with the use of proper glasses.

life. May my friends be happy in this and a better life! but I value not what becomes of posterity when I consider from what monsters they are to spring."

Pope agreed that the most melancholy effect of old age was the increasing catalogue of friends that were lost.[1] Swift had asked whether he had found any new friends to make up for those that were gone. This, the poet declares, would be impossible, but as the continual flowing of a river takes away our flowers and plants, while it throws up weeds and sedges in their place, so the course of time brought something—though of an inferior kind—instead of what it took away.

"Thus I have acquired," he explains, "without my seeking, a few chance acquaintance of young men, who look rather to the past age than to the present, and therefore the future may have some hopes of them.

"If I love them, it is because they honour some of those whom I and the world have lost, or are losing. Two or three of them have distinguished themselves in Parliament, and, you will own, in a very uncommon manner, when I tell you it is by their asserting of independency and contempt of corruption. One or two are linked to me by their love of the same studies and the same authors; but I will own to you, my moral capacity has got so much the better of my poetical, that I have

[1] This idea is beautifully developed in the "Imitation of Horace," addressed to Colonel Cottrell (Epistle II., Book II.):

> Years following years, steal something every day;
> At last they steal us from ourselves away;
> In one our frolics, our amusements end,
> In one a mistress drops, in one a friend.

This passage was an especial favourite with Swift.

few acquaintance on the latter score, and none without a casting weight on the former. . . .

"Mrs. Blount sighs more for you than for the loss of youth. She says she will be agreeable many years hence, for she has learned that secret from some receipts of your writing." [1]

When the correspondence with Swift came to be published a few years later, Pope's new friends, to whom he had been writing in terms of extravagant compliment, were not a little annoyed to find themselves compared to weeds and sedges. One of the most devoted of the "weeds" was Mr. Lyttelton, afterwards known as the "good" Lord Lyttelton.[2] Being of a literary turn, the young man was eagerly desirous that Pope should lend the weight of his genius to the Opposition. In December Lord Lyttelton was taking the cure at Bath, and he wrote thence to Pope:

"I can hardly think of ever being ill again after drinking down health another month, and must desire you for the future to consider me as being, next to the royal family, the most incapable of sickness, pain, or any bodily infirmity of all the men you ever knew, excepting only the immortal

[1] Probably from Swift's "Advice to a very Young Lady on her Marriage." The young lady is particularly enjoined to improve her mind—an unfashionable doctrine at that period.

[2] George, first Baron Lyttelton (1709–73). He was M.P. for Okehampton at this time, and was looked upon as one of the leading lights among the younger members of the Opposition; but his real political career began after the fall of Walpole. He was created Baron Lyttelton of Frankley in 1756. His best known works, the "Dialogues of the Dead," and the "Monody" on the death of his wife, were not published in Pope's lifetime. Lyttelton was secretary to the Prince of Wales at this time.

Dr. Cheyne, who desires his compliments to you, and bids me tell you that he shall live at least two centuries by being a real and practical philosopher,[1] while such gluttonous pretenders to philosophy as you, Dr. Swift, and my Lord Bolingbroke, die of eating and drinking at fourscore. The doctor is the greatest singularity and the most delightful I ever met with. I am not his patient, but am to be his disciple, and to see a manuscript of his, which comprehends all that is necessary, salutary, or useful, either for the body or the soul."

By the end of the month Lyttelton pronounced himself completely cured, and very eager to get back to town, in order that he may see Mr. Pope again. However, to show that he is master of his passions, he will keep quiet for a week or two longer, and then come to Twickenham in most outrageous spirits, "and overturn you like Bounce, when you let her loose after a regimen of physic and confinement. I am very glad that his royal highness has received two such honourable presents at a time, as a whelp of hers,[2] and the freedom of the city."[3]

[1] Dr. Cheyne died in 1743, aged 72, so that his dietary system did not prolong his life much beyond the days of the ordinary flesh-eater and wine-drinker.

[2] Pope had presented the prince with one of the much-sought-after puppies of his Danish dog, Bounce. It was probably for this puppy's collar that he wrote the inscription :

I am his highness' dog at Kew.
Pray tell me, sir, whose dog are you ?

As Mrs. Delany remarks, a denizen of the nursery might have turned out as good a couplet.

[3] The prince received the freedom of the city on December 17 of this year.

CHAPTER L

1737

Mr. Pope's Prose Works—Pope as Letter-writer —Invitation to Swift—Epistle to Murray

THIS year saw the publication of no less than five Imitations of Horace and the authorised version of the "Correspondence," which was issued in folio and quarto to match with the remainder of the poet's works. Taking the last first, in the preface of this edition Pope puts forth yet another apology for printing his own correspondence. He begins by explaining that he has been very badly used by the publication, without his consent, of some letters written during his giddy youth.[1] In consequence of this misfortune he had recalled the great bulk of his letters from his correspondents. He was sorry to find the number so great, but had immediately lessened it by burning three-fourths of it. The remainder he had kept because they preserved the memory of some former friendships, and set certain incidents in a new light. It was notorious that many volumes had been published under the title of "Mr. Pope's Correspondence," with promises of more, and offers of encouragement

[1] The letters to Henry Cromwell.

to all persons who would send any letters of his to the press. However the present collection might be received he could not but lament the necessity for such a publication, and, as the victim of booksellers' forgeries, felt himself injured alike as an author, as man, and as a member of society. "The printing of private letters in such a manner," he concludes, "is the worst sort of betraying conversation, as it has evidently the most extensive and lasting ill consequences." [1]

The avowed edition, relates Johnson, who could remember its appearance, may have found readers, but as the facts were minute and the characters little known, it awoke no popular kindness or resentment, and the book never became the subject of conversation. Considered merely as compositions, Pope's own letters seemed artificial and premeditated. He affected to despise his own poetry, pretended insensibility to criticism, and imagined himself surrounded by enemies. Although the letters exhibit a "perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence and particular fondness," although they profess liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness, yet, in the correspondence with Swift more especially, "there appears such narrowness of mind as makes them insensible of any excellence that has not some

[1] On this passage Lady Mary Wortley comments in a manuscript fragment preserved at Sandon.

"I agree with Mr. Pope," she remarks, "in all that he says of the indecency and immorality of publishing private letters, but what, then, must be said of himself, who is now become the publisher of dead men's letters, from whom he could have no previous leave of publication, several of which I do not doubt are wrote by himself, and falsely ascribed to them."

affinity with their own, and confines their esteem and approbation to so small a number, that whosoever should form his opinion of the age from their representation, would suppose them to have lived amidst ignorance and barbarity, unable to find among their contemporaries either virtue or intelligence, and persecuted by those that could not understand them."

Though the more witty portion of Pope's "Correspondence" may once have been regarded as a model of fine letter-writing, the whole scene, to modern taste, "takes the ludicrous air of old and young fops dancing a minuet with each other, practising the most elaborate grimaces, sinkings and risings the most awful, bows the most overshadowing, until plain walking, running, or the motions of natural dancing are thought too insipid for utterance."

The "Correspondence" did one good service to posterity, in that it served as an awful warning and object-lesson to the most charming of our letter-writers.

"I found the consequence attending, or likely to attend, the eulogium you bestowed," wrote Cowper to Unwin. "If my friend thought me witty before, he shall think me ten times witty hereafter; where I joked once I will joke five times, and for one sensible remark I will send him a dozen. Now this foolish vanity would have spoiled me quite, and would have made me as disgusting a letter-writer as Pope, who seems to have thought that unless a sentence was well turned, and every period pointed with some conceit, it was not worth the

carriage. Accordingly he is to me, except in a very few instances, the most disagreeable maker of epistles that ever I met with."

It must be admitted that the most interesting letters in the "Correspondence" are those written by the poet's friends—Swift, Gay, Arbuthnot, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Pope's unfortunate theory that to send "news" or to detail gossip was derogatory to himself and insulting to his correspondents, accounts for the dulness and vapidity of many of his letters. On the rare occasions that he condescends to relate some experience that has befallen himself or a friend, he can be both vivid and interesting. It is impossible not to feel a grudge against him and his theories when we reflect upon the age he lived in, the friendships he enjoyed, and the picture he might have left to us of men and times, if he had treated of events and "personalities," instead of dealing out professions, platitudes, and compliments.

At the time that this collection was prepared for the press many of Pope's distinguished friends were gone, and one undistinguished but regular correspondent, John Caryll, had died the previous year. It was a simple matter to transfer some of the high-sounding sentiments and friendly professions addressed to Caryll into letters addressed to the celebrated names of Addison, Steele, and Congreve. A hundred years later a box of manuscripts was discovered by a Roman Catholic priest who was living in a farmhouse on the Ladyholt property. They proved to be copies, made by Caryll, of the letters that he had returned to Pope. The un-

scrupulous fashion in which these had been manipulated by the poet was now made clear, and this, together with the discovery of the Wycherley manuscripts, and the obvious alterations of names and dates in other parts of the "Correspondence," afford only too much evidence that no letter in the collection can be accepted as entirely genuine unless it can be compared with the original. Thus, the correspondence that was intended to prove, beyond all doubt, the honesty, candour, and loyalty of the poet's character has convicted him of deceit and forgery.[1] There is a dramatic fitness about the manner in which the punishment suits the crime that would have supplied him with material for a homily had another man been the criminal.

Some proofs of Swift's failing powers may be found in his comment that from this volume of letters "there might be collected the best system that ever was wrote out for the conduct of human life, at least to shame all reasonable men out of their follies and vices.

"It is some recommendation of this kingdom, and of the taste of the people, that you are at least as highly celebrated here as you are at home. If you will blame us for slavery, corruption, atheism, and such trifles, do it freely, but include England, only

[1] Aaron Hill, in a letter to Richardson, dated September 10, 1744, says that "one of his [Pope's] worst mistakes was that unnecessary noise he used to make in boast of his morality. It seemed to me almost a call upon suspicion that a man should rate the duties of plain honesty as if they had been qualities extraordinary. And, in fact, I saw on some occasions that he found these duties too severe for practice, and but prized himself upon the character in proportion to the pains it cost him to support it."

with an addition of every other vice. I wish you would give orders against the corruption of English by those scribblers who send us over their trash in prose and verse, with abominable curtailings and quaint modernisms."[1]

Having once tasted blood in the shape of praise for his letter-writing talents, Pope was eager to publish the most interesting portion of his correspondence—that carried on for so many years between himself and Swift. Writing to Lord Orrery in March, he expresses his surprise that the dean should have taken no notice whatever of his repeated applications for the return of his letters, and he began to think that these must have been lent to some of the designing persons by whom Swift was said to be surrounded.

"I told him," continues Pope, "as soon as I found myself obliged to publish an edition of letters, to my great sorrow, that I wished to make use of some of these: nor did I think any part of my correspondences would do me a greater honour, and be really a greater pleasure to me, than what might preserve the memory how well we loved one another.[2] I find the dean was not quite of the same opinion, or he would not, I think, have denied this. . . . My sincere love for this valuable, indeed incomparable man, will accompany him through life and pursue his memory, were I to

[1] Swift objected to such common abbreviations as "can't" and "shan't," and still more to such curtailments as "poz," "phiz," and "incog."

[2] This shows that Pope could see no objection to doing himself what he found so shocking in other people, namely, publishing private correspondence.

live a hundred lives, as many of his works will live, which are absolutely original, unequalled, unexampled. His humanity, his charity, his condescension, his candour, are equal to his wit, and require as good and true a taste to be equally valued."

At Pope's request Orrery forwarded this designedly flattering missive to Swift, with an urgent request that he might be allowed to take over Pope's letters when he went to England in the summer. The dean, who hitherto had proved very shy of the subject, reluctantly gave his consent. At this time Pope was renewing his absurd proposal that Swift should come and end his days at Twickenham.

"I am now my own master too much," he wrote on March 23. "My house is too large; my gardens furnish too much wood and provision for my use. My servants are sensible, and tender of me; they have inter-married, and are become rather low friends than servants; and to all that I see here with pleasure, they take a pleasure in being useful. I conclude this is your case too in your domestic life, and I sometimes think of your old housekeeper as my nurse, though I tremble at the sea which only divides us."

In the course of the summer Lord Orrery delivered a packet of letters at Twickenham. The dean said that he had read them over, and had found nothing to be left out, since none of them contained any allusions to party matters. He had, however, discovered a chasm of six years in the correspondence which he could not account for, as he was sure that

he had kept all the letters. This remark, and the fact that the dean appeared to forget that he had sent the packet, gave colour, as we shall afterwards see, to Pope's declaration that he had only received a very few of the manuscripts, and that the great bulk of his letters must have been given to, or stolen by, some person about the dean.

The "Imitations of Horace," published in the course of this year, must be, with one exception, briefly passed over. The "Epistle to Murray"[1] (Sixth Epistle of the First Book of Satires) is a polished piece of work, but few would now be inclined to agree with Warburton that it is the most perfect of all Pope's compositions in this line. He was unable, or perhaps disinclined, to reproduce the true pagan spirit of the original, and the little bits of morality with which he tries to qualify the sentiments of Horace seem out of place in such surroundings. The Epistle begins with the openly acknowledged theft of a couple of lines from Creech's[2] translation :

> Not to admire is all the art I know,
> To make men happy, and to keep them so.

Everything being but vanity of vanities, the Latin poet seems to reason, men should follow their own pursuits or desires with a light heart and a serene spirit. Pope, as a professed moralist, was not

[1] Afterwards the great Earl of Mansfield, Chief Justice of the King's Bench. He was a younger son of Lord Stormont's.

[2] Thomas Creech (1659–1700). He was head master of Sherborne, and translated the "Odes," "Satires," and "Epistles" of Horace, besides Theocritus, Lucretius and other classical writers.

adapted to preach such an Epicurean creed with fervour or conviction. He is hardly representing Horace fairly when he exclaims :

> Would ye be blessed? despise low joys, low gains;
> Disdain whatever Cornbury [1] disdains;
> Be virtuous, and be happy for your pains.[2]

The most interesting passage is the address to Murray himself. If not inclined to admire "beaming diamonds and reflected plate," or to "be struck with bright brocade or Tyrian dyes," the great lawyer may yet—

> At council-board rejoice,
> To see their judgments hang upon thy voice;
> From morn till night, at Senate, Rolls, and Hall,
> Plead much, read more, dine late, or not at all.
> But wherefore all this labour, all this strife?
> For fame, for riches, for a noble wife?
> Shall one whom nature, learning, birth conspired
> To form, not to admire, but be admired,
> Sigh, while his Chloe, blind to wit and worth,
> Weds the rich dulness of some son of earth? [3]
> Yet time ennobles or degrades each line;
> It brightened Craggs's, and may darken thine.

[1] Henry Hyde, Viscount Cornbury (1710–53). He was one of Pope's Jacobite friends, and a disinterested one, if the story is true of his refusing a handsome pension obtained for him by Lord Essex. He addressed to Pope some verses on the "Essay on Man." Lady Mary Wortley thought that his heart was better than his head, and ridiculed his literary attempts.

[2] Horace (in Conington's translation) merely says :

> If virtue holds the secret, don't defer :
> Be off with pleasure and be on with her.

[3] Murray was in love with a beautiful girl who listened favourably to his suit; but her family thought him ineligible, and married her to a country squire.

The conclusion of the whole matter is in accordance with the pagan philosophy:

> If, after all, we must with Wilmot own,
> The cordial drop of life is love alone.
> And Swift cry wisely, "Vive la Bagatelle!"
> The man that loves and laughs must sure do well.[1]

[1] Pope qualifies this by a line (not in Horace) in which he recommends the reader who is not satisfied with such philosophy to "take the council which I gave you first." This presumably refers to the advice, "Be virtuous, and be happy for your pains."

CHAPTER LI

1737

"Epistle to Augustus"—Danger of Prosecution —Visit to Bath—Death of the Queen

PASSING over the "Epistle to Colonel Cotterel,"[1] (Second Epistle of the Second Book of Horace)

[1] Warton says that the Epistle was addressed to Colonel Cottrell, or Cotterell, of Rousham, but the owner of Rousham at this time was Robert Dormer. He died in 1738, and James Dormer, who was more especially Pope's friend, succeeded. His mother's name was Cotterell, and he left his estate to his cousin, Sir Clement Cotterell, who took the name of Dormer. James Dormer was Colonel of the first troop of Horse Grenadier Guards.

The most interesting passage in this Epistle is autobiographical in character, and therefore deserves to be quoted :

> Bred up at home, full early I begun
> To read in Greek the wrath of Peleus' son.
> Besides, my father taught me, from a lad,
> The better art to know the good from bad :
> (And little sure imported to remove,
> To hunt for Truth in Maudlin's learned grove),
> But knottier points we knew not half so well
> Deprived us soon of our paternal cell ;
> And certain laws, by sufferers thought unjust,
> Denied all posts of profit or of trust :
> Hopes after hopes of pious Papists failed,
> While mighty William's thundering arm prevailed.
> For right hereditary taxed and fined,
> He stuck to poverty with peace of mind ;
> And me, the Muses helped to undergo it ;
> Convict a Papist he, and I a poet.
> But (thanks to Homer) since I live and thrive,
> Indebted to no prince or peer alive,
> Sure I should want the care of ten Monroes,
> If I would scribble rather than repose.

and the "Ode to Venus,"[1] we come to the great "Epistle to Augustus," which appeared in June of this year. This, and the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot," are probably the two satires in which Pope has given us the most of his own thought, his own feelings, and his own self. The "Epistle to Augustus," apart from its poetical excellence, is of the highest interest by reason of the light that it throws upon Pope's literary tastes, and his attitude towards English poets of an earlier day.

In his Advertisement Pope observes that this Epistle will show the learned world to have fallen into two mistakes: one, that Augustus was a patron of the poets in general, whereas he prohibited all but the best writers to name him; the other that this Epistle is only a general discourse of poetry, whereas it was an Apology for the poets. "Horace here pleads the cause of his contemporaries, first against the taste of the town, whose humour it was to magnify the authors of the preceding age; secondly, against the Court and nobility, who encouraged writers only for the theatre; and lastly, the emperor himself, who had conceived them of little use to the Government. . . ."

The Epistle opens with the exordium to Augustus, the extravagant compliments of Horace to his emperor being addressed in ironical paraphrase to King George:

> While you, great patron of mankind! sustain
> The balanced world, and open all the main;[2]

[1] Book IV., Ode I.

[2] Bowles points out that this was written at a time when the Spaniards, having the right of searching merchants' vessels for

Your country, chief, in arms abroad defend,
At home with morals, arts, and laws amend;
How shall the Muse, from such a monarch, steal
An hour, and not defraud the public weal?

Though the great monarchs of the past had met with ingratitude, and the great conquerors had to fight against envy—

To thee, the world its present homage pays,
The harvest early, but mature the praise:
Great friend of liberty! in kings a name
Above all Greek, above all Roman fame.

Just in one instance, Augustus, and his people with him, show a partiality which is stigmatised as unfair. They are the advocates of folly—literary folly—dead and gone, and value authors, like coins, for the rust and not the gold.

Chaucer's worst ribaldry is learned by rote,
And beastly Skelton [1] heads of houses quote:
One likes no language but "The Faery Queen";
A Scot will fight for "Christ's Kirk o' the Green." [2]

contraband goods, had exercised that right in an intolerable manner. It was reported that they had cut off the ears of one Jenkins, a sea-captain, and sent them to the king. There was a universal cry that the British flag had been insulted, and the English braved on their own element. "Opening all the main" meant, therefore, "that the king was so liberal as to leave it open to the Spaniards."

[1] John Skelton (*c.* 1469–1529). He was a native of Norfolk, and became rector of Diss in that county. He was created Poet Laureate by both Universities, and was notorious for the outspoken quality of his poetry. He attacked Wolsey, and is said to have been imprisoned by him. His "Colyn Cloute" and "Phylyp Sparrowe" are among his best-known poems. A volume called "Pithy, Pleasant, and Profitable Workes of Maister Skelton," had been reprinted in 1736. Pope says that this consisted almost wholly of ribaldry, obscenity, and scurrilous language.

[2] A Scotch poem of low life, attributed to James I.

And each true Briton is to Ben so civil,
He swears the Muses met him at the Devil.

The satirist asks why we should not be wiser than our sires, and inquires at what age a poet grows divine. Shakespeare, he exclaims—

Shakespeare (whom you and every playhouse bill
Style the divine, the matchless, what you will)
For gain, not glory, winged his roving flight,
And grew immortal in his own despite.
Ben, poor and old, as little seemed to heed
The life to come in every poet's creed.
Who now reads Cowley? [1] if he pleases yet,
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit;
Forgot his epic, nay, Pindaric art,
But still I love the language of his heart.

The poet imagines the public crying out in amazement, "But surely, surely, these were famous men," and talking glibly the usual critical platitudes about "Shakespeare's nature and Cowley's wit," and how "Beaumont's judgment checked what Fletcher writ." All this may be true enough, he agrees, but if the public says that our fathers never broke a rule—

Why then, I say, the public is a fool;
But let them own that greater faults than we
They had, and greater virtues, I'll agree.
Spenser himself affects the obsolete,
And Sidney's verse halts ill on Roman feet: [2]
Milton's strong pinion now not heaven can bound,
Now, serpent-like, in prose he sweeps the ground;

[1] Cowley's poetry had gone out of fashion, but that Pope himself had studied him with great attention is proved by the numerous images that he borrowed from him. It was just as well for Pope that his contemporaries did not read Cowley.

[2] An allusion to the hexameters and pentameters in the "Arcadia."

In quibbles angel and archangel join,
And God the Father turns a school-divine.
Not that I'd lop the beauties from his book
Like slashing Bentley with his desperate hook,[1]
Or damn all Shakespeare, like the affected fool
At Court, who hates whate'er he read at school.

This modern Horace has little admiration to spare for the wits of either Charles's days, "The mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease," [2] and he loses all patience when he hears modern work censured "not as bad, but new." Yet, if he only hints at a weed on Avon's banks, the people rise up in a rage, and "swear all shame is lost in George's age." Following his model, who illustrated the changefulness of literary standards by contrasting the taste and manner of life of primitive Rome with those of the empire, Pope describes the once sober, abstemious life of the average Englishman, who eschewed luxury, worshipped like his fathers, and taught their frugal virtues to his heir. But now the times were changed—

And one poetic itch
Has seized the Court and city, poor and rich : [3]
Sons, sires, and grandsire, all will wear the bays,
Our wives read Milton, and our daughters plays.

[1] A double meaning was probably intended here. In the works that he edited Bentley enclosed the lines he considered doubtful in hooks or brackets.

[2] Sprat, Carew, Sedley, and a hundred more,
Like twinkling stars the Miscellanies o'er.

[3] Pope is here following his original too literally. It was scarcely correct to say that both poor and rich were possessed by the scribbling mania at this period. Pope probably had exaggerated views on that point, owing to the fact that such of his acquaintances as wrote plays or poems sent him their compositions to read and correct.

To theatres and to rehearsals throng,
a ll our grace at table is a song.

In other professions men are obliged to serve apprenticeships, or undergo some technical training before they can practise—

But those who cannot write and those who can,
All rhyme and scrawl and scribble to a man.

Yet Augustus is bidden to reflect that the mischief is not serious. The author is usually a simple, harmless lunatic.

Allow him but his plaything of a pen,
He ne'er rebels, nor plots, like other men.

The poet may even be of some service to the State. Children and foreigners learn best from song, and worshippers are touched to a warmer devotion by the help of the Muse, as shown—the example is not a happy one—by the psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins. On the whole, a poet is not altogether a worthless thing, unless he praise some royal monster, or turn religion and virtue to a sport. These literary sins had been too common in the past.

Unhappy Dryden !——In all Charles's days,
Roscommon only boasts unspotted bays ; [1]
And in our own (excuse some courtly stains) [2]
No whiter page than Addison remains.

[1] Lord Roscommon was the author of the "Essay on Translated Verse," which Pope admired. He is singled out for praise in the "Essay on Criticism."

[2] Warburton thinks that this is an allusion to the conduct of Addison in claiming for *Cato* a party significance as soon as George I. came to the throne, though in the previous reign he had objected to the words "Britons, arise !" in Pope's Prologue.

He from the taste obscene reclaims our youth,
And sets the passions on the side of truth,
Forms the soft bosom with the gentlest art,
And pours each human virtue in the heart.

Returning once more to the primitive times, the satirist shows how our rural ancestors solaced themselves after their labours with songs and jokes—innocent at first, but afterwards degenerating into rough libels and lampoons.[1] The law was called in, and at length "poets learned to please and not to wound." With our conquest of France, wit grew polite, and numbers learned to flow. In Restoration days—

The soldier breathed the gallantries of France,
And every flowery courtier writ romance.
Then marble, softened into life, grew warm,
And yielding metal flowed to human form.
Lely on animated canvas stole
The sleepy eye, that spoke the melting soul.

Later still, correctness grew our care. Exact Racine and fiery Corneille taught us that in tragedy as well as song France had something that we might imitate and admire. It was true that the high tragic spirit had long been our own, as proved by the works of Shakespeare, Dryden, and Otway.

But Otway failed to polish or refine,
And fluent Shakespeare scarce effaced a line.[2]

[1] Here again Pope is too closely following his model. English satire was, unlike Latin satire, of a purely literary growth.

[2] Ben Jonson says: "I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare that, in his writing, whatsoever he penned, he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, 'Would he had blotted out a thousand!'"

E'en copious Dryden wanted, or forgot
The last and greatest art, the art to blot.[1]

Even in the humbler walk of comedy, how seldom did even the best approach perfection! Congreve's fools are no fools, Farquhar's dialogue is often low and pert, Vanbrugh wants grace, though he never wanted wit, and "The stage how loosely does Astræa tread!"[2] Something of Pope's chronic grudge against the theatre, a grudge that was the fruit of failure, comes out in his description of the perilous nature of dramatic adventures:

There still remains, to mortify a wit,
The many-headed monster of the pit;
A senseless, worthless, and unhonoured crowd;
Who, to disturb their betters mighty proud,
Clattering their sticks before ten lines are spoke,
Call for the farce, the bear, or the black joke.
What dear delight to Britons farce affords!
Ever the taste of mobs, but now of lords.

The poet may be an absurd and tiresome creature, ready to recite nine hours in ten, and expecting a place or pension in return for a poem, yet Augustus should reflect that an emperor's shining glory can only be handed down to posterity by some worthy Laureate. Kings had been careful in their choice of sculptors or painters to render their figures immortal, but where Laureates were concerned they had lacked a discerning spirit.

[1] Dr. Johnson says that Dryden was no lover of labour, and that what he thought sufficient he did not stop to make better.

[2] The name taken by Mrs. Aphra Behn, who thought it necessary to success to imitate the licentiousness of the masculine playwrights. Her works are less witty, but not more immoral, than those of Pope's former friends, Wycherley and Vanbrugh.

The hero William, and the martyr Charles,
One knighted Blackmore, and one pensioned Quarles.[1]

In high ironic strain the satirist gives a taste of his own mettle in a passage which pretends to enumerate the glories of the king :

Oh ! could I mount on the Mæonian wing,
Your arms, your actions, your repose to sing !
What seas you traversed, and what fields you fought !
Your country's peace how oft, how dearly bought ![2]
How barbarous rage subsided at your word,
And nations wondered while they dropped the sword !
How, when you nodded, o'er the land and deep
Peace stole her wing, and wrapped the world in sleep ;
Till earth's extremes your mediation own,
And Asia's tyrants tremble at your throne.

But, suddenly forsaking the heroic strain, the poet drops down to earth again with the recollection that Augustus despises verse, and that he himself is not used to panegyric strains. Besides, an evil fate attends on all he writes, for when he aims at praise people say he bites. Moreover, a vile encomium doubly ridicules. If true, it is but a woeful likeness ; if false—

Praise undeserved is scandal in disguise.

Therefore, if ever he should stoop to flatter, he wishes that his dirty leaves may—

(Like journals, odes, and such forgotten things
As Eusden, Philips, Settle, writ of kings)

[1] Francis Quarles (1592–1644), now remembered chiefly for his "Emblems," published in 1635. He was appointed chronologer to the City of London in 1639, and he wrote in defence of Charles I.; but there is no record of his having received a pension.

[2] An insinuation that the long peace was bought at the expense of honour.

Clothe spice, line trunks, or, fluttering in a row,
Befringe the rails of Bedlam and Soho.

The strong satire with which this Epistle abounds was so artfully concealed that many persons, even some of those in high places, read it as a panegyric on the king and Ministry, and imagined that Pope had forsaken the Opposition.[1] These must have been the same intelligent persons who read the "Essay on Man" as a pious tract. Pope had boasted, in his "Letter to a Noble Lord," and also in his private correspondence, that he had never written anything disrespectful to the Government or the royal family. He seems to have cherished the delusion that royalties and ministers were too stupid to perceive the sarcasm underlying his compliments. Swift was, of course, among the clear-eyed, who understood and thoroughly enjoyed the satire.

"I have read your 'Epistle of Horace to Augustus,'" he writes on May 31. "The curious are looking out, some for flattery, some for ironies in it; the sour folks think they have found out some;[2] but your admirers here—I mean every man of taste—affect to be certain that the profession of friendship to me in the same poem[3] will not suffer you to be thought a flatterer. My happiness is that you are too far engaged, and in spite of you the ages to come will celebrate me, and know that you were a friend who loved and esteemed me, although I died the object of Court and party hatred."

[1] Warton.

[2] Some flattery.

[3] In the passage beginning "Let Ireland tell how wit upheld her cause."

Swift was, no doubt, delighted to hear from his friend Barber that Pope's language, more especially in the passage relating to the dean's political activity, had given great offence. Barber was assured that it had been under debate in the Council whether Pope should not be prosecuted on account of the line—

The rights a Court attacked, a poet saved—

but the affair of Wood's Halfpence having happened in the previous reign, the Council decided to "pass it by."

Pope must have felt that he had fully earned his holiday when, his various publications being safely launched on the town, he took flight to the country about the beginning of August. On September 3 he wrote to Fortescue:

"I have now been a full month on the ramble, first to Southampton and Portsmouth, but the stormy weather prevented my design on the Isle of Wight; thence to Oxford and Cirencester and Bath. It will be near Michaelmas before I shall see Richmond or Mrs. Blount, who went thither (as I hear by the last post) but two days ago, to enjoy the palace you left her, being much rejoiced to be at repose after a ramble she has also made." Pope urges his friend to make some improvements in his wood at Buckland. "Cut out some walks for yourself, while you yet have legs, and make some plain and smooth under your trees, to admit a chaise or chariot when you have none. I find myself already in the condition, though not the circumstances, of an aged judge, and I am forced to be carried in that manner over Lord Bathurst's plantations."

Pope enjoyed Patty Blount's company during part of the summer. That they met at Bath we may gather from a letter to Bethel, written on September 28, after the poet's return to Twickenham.

"I stayed to write to you till I had ended my journies, till I could give you an account of the effect they had both upon mine and Mrs. Blount's health. I can now tell you that we are both better, and that she, by the use of the Spa water here, with exercise, is in a very good way, but I think still in the way of being in as bad a one as ever, next winter; for it seems to little purpose that she parts with the summer months with what is the bane of her quiet (which is the health of the soul, and on which the health of the body so much depends) when she constantly returns in the winter to the same house, the same company, and the same uneasinesses. I have been first at Southampton, then at Portsmouth, then Oxford, then Cirencester, then Bath, then Oxford again, and so home. . . .

"[The doctor[1] magnified the Scarborough waters, and indeed all waters, but above all the common water. He was greatly edified with me for having left off suppers, and upon my telling him that most of my acquaintance had not only done so, but had not drunk out three dozen of wine in my house in the whole twelvemonth, he blessed God, and said, my conversation was with angels]. . . .

"I am glad by my rambles to have escaped much of the disagreeable noise and impertinent chatter of this place, about the late differences of

[1] Cheyne.

the Courts.[1] To the other reasons I gave you in my last letter, of my joy in the *sex* of the child,[2] I may add this once more, now that we may have no prospect in the next generation, of a third quarrel between a father and a son. I am always sorry for any such, public or private." [3]

Pope's account of his newly acquired abstemiousness is not borne out by some letters of Kent's[4] preserved in the Spencer papers. Writing to a friend on November 28, he says :

"Have not seen Pope but once these two months before last Sunday morning ; and he came to town the night before ; the next morning he came before I was up. I would not get up, and sent him away to disturb some one else ; he came back and said he could meet with nobody. I got dressed, and went with him to Richardson, and had great diversion ; he showed three pictures of Lord Bolingbroke. . . . Another of Pope in a morning gown, with a strange view of the garden, and to show the obelisk, as in mourning for his mother's death. The son of Richardson and Pope agreed that Pope's head was Tizianesco ; the old boy grew warm, and said, 'We have done our best.' My service to Mr. Bethel, and tell him that his friend

[1] The quarrel between the king and Prince of Wales. The prince had not told the king of the princess's condition. In the middle of the night he hurried her from Hampton Court to St. James's Palace, where her confinement took place. After the baptism of the child he was ordered to leave the palace, and the Court and foreign Ministers were requested to ignore him.

[2] Frederick's first child was a girl, the Princess Augusta.

[3] Unpublished except for the passage in brackets.

[4] William Kent, the painter, architect, and landscape gardener. As a *protégé* of Lord Burlington's, he was well known to Pope.

Pope is the greatest glutton I know. He now talks of the many good things he can make; he told me of a soup that must be seven hours a-making; he dined with Mr. Murray and Lady Betty, and was very drunk last Saturday night. He says if he comes to town he'll teach him how to live, and leave his roasted apples and water." [1]

The death of Queen Caroline on November 20 brought Pope to town, since his porpoise-like habit of "bobbing up" in any period of excitement had not deserted him. The event temporarily filled the public mind to the exclusion of all else, and the poet found that it was difficult to get his own little bits of private business transacted.

"The death of great persons," he sagely observes in a letter to Mrs. Allen, "is a sort of surprise to all, as every one's death is to himself, though both should be equally expected and prepared for. We begin to esteem and command our superiors, at the time that we pity them, because then they seem not above ourselves. The queen showed, by the confession of all about her, the utmost firmness and temper to her last moments, and through the course of great torments. What character historians will allow her, I do not know; but all her domestic servants, and those nearest her, give her the best testimony, that of sincere tears. But the public is always hard; rigid at best, even when just, in its opinion of any one." [2]

In another letter, June 27, 1738, Kent says:

"Pope is very busy; he last night came to me about eight o'clock in liquor, and would have more wine."

[2] Pope showed himself a hard judge of the dead queen in his Dialogue "Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight," published the following year.

CHAPTER LII

1738

Politics—"Epistle to Bolingbroke"—Johnson's "London"—"Epilogue to the Satires: Dialogue I."

IT has been shown how Pope, through the influence of Bolingbroke and the attentions of the prince, had been gradually drawn into the vortex of party politics. He was now recognised as the Laureate of the Opposition—that curious amalgam of Tories, Jacobites, and discontented Whigs. The biting satire of the "Epistle to Augustus" must have delighted the Patriot party, who were smarting under the defeat of the motion to increase the inadequate allowance of their prince. Pope, whose little villa was for several years the meeting-place for the Opposition leaders, took his politics, like his philosophy, from Bolingbroke, and his later satires are as directly inspired by his chosen Mentor as was the "Essay on Man." The death of the queen, the staunch supporter of Walpole, filled the Tories with fresh hopes, while the growing unpopularity of the minister, owing to his Excise policy, his alleged truckling to Spain, and his corrupt methods, seemed to show that the end was in sight.

Flattered by the confidences of statesmen, and impressed by all the fine talk about patriotism, freedom, disinterestedness, and the like, Pope lent his pen to the cause, and put forth in the course of the year the Dialogues "Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight," in which he paints in vivid colours the corruption of those in authority, the evil influence of the moneyed interest, and the shocking state of the country generally. Instead, however, of recommending any of the Opposition panacea, he proclaimed the supreme power of satire, as wielded by one honest man (himself,) to scourge and cure a benighted nation.

The "Epilogue to the Satires," as the Dialogues were afterwards called, was preceded by the "Epistle to Bolingbroke," imitated from "The First Epistle of the First Book of Horace." This professes to be the poet's farewell to verse-writing. He reproaches his friend for wishing to break the Sabbath of his days, and points out that even modest Cibber has left the stage.[1] Still, even in his retirement he, free and independent as ever, will play his chosen part—

> Sometimes a patriot, active in debate,
> Mix with world, and battle for the State,
> Free as young Lyttelton,[2] her cause pursue,
> Still true to virtue, and as warm as true.

From those wretched men who are possessed by avarice or guilty love, he asks but a patient ear, since there are words and rhymes, which fresh and

[1] Cibber retired in 1730.

[2] Lord Waldegrave says of Lyttelton: "He was a man of parts, a scholar, no indifferent writer, and by far the honestest man of the whole society."

From a mezzotint engraving after the painting by J. Murray.

HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

fresh applied, "Will cure the arrant'st puppy of his pride." As a specimen, he comes out with so blatant a platitude that it sounds like a burlesque by Welsted or Moore-Smythe of his favourite teaching:

> 'Tis the first virtue, vices to abhor,
> And the first wisdom to be fool no more.

But if the voice of wisdom urges that virtue shall be sought, the voice of London cries out—

> Get money, money still,
> And then let virtue follow if she will.

The disinterested doctrines preached by the satirist would no doubt render him unpopular at Court, but if that were urged against him he would give the answer Reynard gave:

> I cannot like, dread sir, your royal cave:
> Because I see, by all the tracks about,
> Full many a beast goes in, but none come out.[1]

But if the king is a lion, the people are a many-headed beast, and know not what to do or what they want. Rich and poor alike, there is not one who has it in his power "to act consistent with himself one hour." The rich build palaces and tire of them, while the poor have the same itch.

> They change their weekly barber, weekly news,
> Prefer a new japanner to their shoes.
> Discharge their garrets, move their beds, and run
> (They know not whither) in a chaise and one;
> They hire their sculler, and, when once aboard,
> Grow sick, and damn the climate—like a lord.

[1] "Mr. Pope, you don't love princes," said Frederick to the poet one day. "Sir, I beg your pardon." "Well, you don't love kings then." "Sir, I own I love the lion best before his claws are grown."

The poet complains that his friend laughs at him if his dress does not harmonise—

> If coat and breeches strangely vary,
> White gloves and linen worthy Lady Mary,[1]

but fails to notice a proof of incoherent mind. Is this, he concludes—

> Is this my guide, philosopher, and friend?
> This he who loves me, and who ought to mend;
> Who ought to make me (what he can or none)
> That man divine whom wisdom calls her own;
> Great without title, without fortune blessed;[2]
> Rich e'en when plundered, honoured while oppressed;
> Loved without youth, and followed without power;
> At home, though exiled—free, though in the Tower?[3]

It is pleasant to know that Pope was more generous in his actions than in his judgments. On the same day that the scathing satire "Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight" was published, a poem called "London" appeared, an imitation of Juvenal by Samuel Johnson, a writer as yet unknown to fame.[4] "London" was published anonymously, but the first buzz of the literary circles was, "Here is an unknown poet, greater than Pope." Boswell may be allowed to tell the story in his own words:

"Pope who then filled the poetical throne without a rival, must have been particularly struck by the

[1] Another hit at poor Lady Mary Wortley.

[2] Bolingbroke, on his attainder, had been deprived of his seat in the House of Lords. His estates were also forfeited, but these were restored to him when he was allowed to return to England.

[3] Bolingbroke, unlike Oxford, was never in the Tower. He fled the country at the prospect of arrest.

[4] Johnson was then twenty-nine.

sudden appearance of such a poet, and, to his credit let it be remembered, that his feelings and conduct on the occasion were candid and liberal. He requested Mr. Richardson, son of the painter, to find out who this new author was. Mr. Richardson, after some inquiry, having informed him that he had discovered only that his name was Johnson, and that he was some obscure man, Pope said, 'He will soon be *déterré*.'"

A year later, after Johnson had published his Latin poem, "Marmor Norfolciense," he was anxious to obtain the head-mastership of a school in Shropshire. Pope, who knew nothing of him save his books, took the trouble to write and ask Lord Gower to use his interest and influence in the matter; but, in spite of this powerful recommendation, Johnson did not succeed in his application.

In a note to Allen an instance of Pope's private charity is recorded. "I cannot help telling you," he writes on April 28, "the rapture you accidentally gave the poor woman (for whom you left a guinea, on what I told you of my finding her at the end of my garden). I had no notion of her want being so great, as I then told you, when I gave her half a one. But I find I have a pleasure to come, for I will allow her something yearly, and that may be but one year, for I think, by her looks, she is not less than eighty. I am determined to take this charity out of your hands, which I know you will think hard on you."

In this letter Pope asks if Allen would object to have his name inserted in a poem, provided something was said of him that most people would

take ill—that he was a man of no high birth or quality. This "something" was the famous couplet:

> Let low-born Allen, with an awkward shame,
> Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame.

The exact title of the "Epilogue to the Satires" was "One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty-eight: A Dialogue something like Horace." The piece was founded on Bolingbroke's "Dissertation upon Parties." The strongest partisan spirit is displayed throughout; the poet's political friends are held blameless, but the Ministry are all tarred with the same brush, and that a pitchy one. The country is represented as totally ruined, and overwhelmed with dissipation, depravity, and corruption.[1] From the conclusion of the satire it might be supposed that there was neither honesty, honour, public spirit, nor virtue left in the nation.[2]

The Dialogues are supposed to be carried on between Pope and a prudent worldly-minded friend. The Friend begins by reproaching the Poet for various shortcomings—for appearing too seldom in print, for growing too correct and too moral for a wit, and for stealing from Horace.

> But Horace, sir, was delicate, was nice,
> Bubo[3] observes, he lashed no sort of vice.
> Horace would say, Sir Billy[4] served the Crown,
> Blunt would do business, Huggins[5] knew the town;

[1] Warton.
[2] Bowles.
[3] Bubb Dodington.
[4] Sir William Yonge.
[5] Huggins, formerly gaoler of the Fleet Prison, enriched himself by many exactions, for which he was tried and expelled. [Pope.]

In Sappho[1] touch the failings of the sex,
In reverend bishops note some small neglects,[2]
And own the Spaniards did a waggish thing,
Who cropped our ears, and sent them to the king.[3]

And then comes the practical question—What is the use of lashing virtue in high places? It will only be thought that the great man has never offered a bribe. The Poet is urged to go and see Sir Robert. He replies:

See Sir Robert!—hum—
And never laugh for all my life to come?
Seen him I have, but in his happier hour
Of social pleasure, ill-exchanged for power;
Seen him, uncumbered with a venal tribe,
Smile without art and win without a bribe.[4]
Would he oblige me? let me only find,
He does not think me what he thinks mankind.
Come, come, at all I laugh he laughs, no doubt,
The only difference is, I dare laugh out.

The Friend points out that it would be perfectly safe to laugh at Scripture, or honesty, or patriotism, or even some old-fashioned Whig, who preferred his principles to his party. But—

To vice and folly to confine the jest,
Sets half the world, God knows, against the rest.

[1] Lady Mary again.

[2] The original line was:

In reverent S—n note a small neglect.

Sutton was involved in the Corporation frauds, but being a patron of Warburton's, that gentleman asked Pope to suppress the allusions to him in this "Dialogue" and in the third "Moral Essay."

[3] The affair of Jenkins, the sea-captain.

[4] This compliment to Walpole's social talent is an acknowledgment of the French Abbacy which the minister had obtained for Pope's old friend, Thomas Southcote.

The Poet agrees that it would be safe to bid adieu to distinction, satire, warmth, and truth, if he could only borrow Henley's oratory and Osborne's wit :

> The honey dropping from Favonio's tongue, [1]
> The flowers of Bubo, and the flow of Y—ng : [2]
> The gracious dew of pulpit eloquence,
> And all the well-whipt cream of courtly sense.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Then might I sing without the least offence,
> And all I sung should be the nation's sense ;
> Or teach the melancholy Muse to mourn,
> Hang the sad verse on Carolina's urn,[3]
> And hail her passage to the realms of rest,
> All parts performed, and all her children blessed.[4]

The Friend points out that if satire has tact and prudence, it still may lash the greatest—in disgrace :

> For merit will by turns forsake them all,
> Would you know when ? exactly when they fall.

[1] In the first edition the name was Tyrconnel. Lord Tyrconnel was a tame speaker, a supporter of Walpole, and had dismissed Savage from his household. Hence Pope's hostility.

[2] Sir William Yonge again. Lord Hervey said that he had a great command of parliamentary language, "and a talent of talking eloquently without a meaning, and expatiating agreeably upon nothing."

[3] Pope says in a note that the queen's death gave occasion to "many indiscreet and mean performances, unworthy of her memory, whose last moments manifested the utmost courage and resolution."

[4] Caroline was said to have refused to see her eldest son, and give him her blessing. Coxe denies the report. He says the queen sent Frederick her blessing, and told Sir Robert she would have seen him if she had not feared the interview would anger the king.

The Poet replies by vaunting his tolerance and equanimity.

Good Heaven forbid that I should blast their glory,
Who know how like Whig minister to Tory,
And when three sovereigns died,[1] could scarce be vexed,
Considering what a gracious prince was next.

But he cannot endure that the dignity of vice should be lost. With virtue the case was altered:

Virtue may choose the high or low degree,
'Tis just alike to Virtue and to me:
Dwell in a monk, or light upon a king,
She's still the same beloved, contented thing.
Vice is undone if she forgets her birth,
And stoops from angels to the dregs of earth.

Then follows the famous passage descriptive of the Triumph of Vice in high places, the sounding exposure of the corruption of the church, the state, and society in general:

Her birth and beauty crowds and courts confess,
Chaste matrons praise her, and grave bishops bless;
In golden chains the willing world she draws,
And hers the gospel is, and hers the laws,
Mounts the tribunal, lifts her scarlet head,
And sees pale Virtue carted in her stead.
Lo! at the wheels of her triumphal car,
Old England's genius, rough with many a scar,
Dragged in the dust! his arms hang idly round,
His flag inverted trails along the ground;
Our youth, all liveried o'er with foreign gold,
Before her dance: behind her crawl the old!
See thronging millions to the pagod run,
And offer country, parent, wife or son!
Hear her black trumpet through the land proclaim,

[1] William, Anne, and George I.

That *not to be corrupted is the shame*,
In soldier, churchman, patriot, man in power,
'Tis avarice all, ambition is no more!
See, all our nobles begging to be slaves,
See, all our fools aspiring to be knaves!
The wit of cheats, the courage of a whore,
Are what ten thousand envy and adore:
All, all look up with reverential awe,
At crimes that 'scape, or triumph o'er the law:
While truth, worth, wisdom, daily they decry—
Nothing is sacred now but villainy.
Yet may this verse (if such a verse remain)
Show there was one who held it in disdain.

CHAPTER LIII

1738

"Epilogue to the Satires: Dialogue II."—Visit from Bolingbroke—Conduct of "Mrs. Blount"—Marriage of Lord Orrery

STYLE apart, the first "Dialogue" is little more than a long-drawn indictment of a whole nation by a soured poet, who set himself up as the judge and executioner of his fellow-men.[1] The severity of the satire roused both protest and resentment. Aaron Hill, who always played the part of a candid friend, pointed out the tendency to pique and contempt, which seemed to him the only blot on Mr. Pope's character. It was a pity that so humane and benevolent a thinker "should scatter gall which his heart never licensed." If his dear friend would only guard against this seeming "tartness of spirit" by submitting his wit to his philosophy he would become, in Mr. Hill's opinion, the most unnatural good man in the world, and leave himself without a fault.

When, a few months later, the second "Dialogue" appeared, the Friend is represented as remonstrating with the Poet for the libels contained in the first

[1] Horace Walpole used to call Pope the Grand Inquisitor.

part. The latter replies that his accusations are not yet libels in the eye of the law, though they may become so the next day—an allusion to the new Play-house Act, which was regarded as an attack on the liberty of the subject. Moreover, he points out that—

> Vice with such giant strides comes on amain,
> Invention strives to be before in vain;
> Feign what I will, and paint it e'er so strong,
> Some rising genius sins up to my song.

The Friend argues that no one else would lash the guilty by name, and urges that the person should be spared while the vice is exposed. The Poet then calls on Satire, general and unconfined, to spread her broad wings and souse on all the kind.

> Ye statesmen, priests of one religion all!
> Ye tradesmen vile, in army, court, or hall!
> Ye reverend atheists—— F. Scandal! name them—Who?
> P. Why, that's the thing you bid me not to do.
> Who starved a sister,[1] who foreswore a debt,
> I never named; the town's inquiring yet,
> The poisoning dame[2]—— F. You mean—— P. I don't.
> F. You do.
> P. See, now I keep the secret, and not you!

The Friend pleads that one man should not be attacked because he is too high, and another because

[1] An allusion to a couplet in the first Dialogue:

> And at a peer or peeress, shall I fret,
> Who starves a sister or forswears a debt?

Lady Mary Wortley had been accused of ill-treating her sister, Lady Mar, who had been placed in her care in consequence o her mental affliction. Lady Mary, it will be remembered, was charged by Pope with having cheated her admirer, Rémond, over the South Sea business.

[2] Probably Lady Deloraine, the Delia of the "First Satire."

he is too low, for blame. The Poet declares that he praises a courtier, and even a bishop—when he can.[1]

> But does the Court a worthy man remove,
> That instant, I declare, he has my love:
> I shun his zenith, court his mild decline;
> Thus Somers once, and Halifax, were mine.
> Oft in the clear, still mirror of retreat,
> I studied Shrewsbury, the wise and great:
> Carleton's calm sense, and Stanhope's noble flame
> Compared, and knew them generous and the same.
> How pleasing Atterbury's softer hour!
> How shined the soul unconquered in the Tower![2]

The Friend has a sneer at Pope's own much-belauded friends. They happen to be "out," but doubtless they desire to be "in," and they too may become as corrupt as the rest. The Poet retorts that he only dubs those knaves that are so now. But if that is not enough, he'll call to his aid the spirit of Arnall, and lie. Then follows a specimen of his powers in this direction:

> Cobham's a coward, Polwarth is a slave,[3]
> And Lyttelton a dark, designing knave;
> St. John has ever been a wealthy fool—
> But let me add, Sir Robert's mighty dull;
> Has never made a friend in private life,
> And was, besides, a tyrant to his wife.[4]

[1] In the following lines Pope praises Pelham, Scarborough, Secker, Bishop of Oxford, Rundle, Bishop of Derry, Benton, Bishop of Gloucester, and Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne.

[2] This fine passage is too long to quote in full. The other politicians who come in for praise are Pulteney, Chesterfield, Wyndham, and Argyll.

[3] Lord Polwarth, afterwards Lord Marchmont, one of the "Boy Patriots."

[4] In a letter to Fortescue, dated July 31, Pope says:
"You see I have made him [Sir Robert] a second compliment

The Friend inquires how Pope, who is neither in nor out, can possibly be injured by the failings of courtiers or ministers. The other replies, in memorable lines :

> Ask what provocation I have had?
> The strong antipathy of good to bad.
> When truth or virtue an affront endures,
> The affront is mine, my friend, and should be yours.
>
> . . . . .
>
> F. You're strangely proud.
> P. So proud, I am no slave ;
> So impudent, I own myself no knave ;
> So odd, my country's ruin makes me grave.
> Yes, I am proud ; I must be proud to see
> Men not afraid of God afraid of me ;
> Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,
> Yet touched and shamed by ridicule alone.

Satire, it would appear, is the sacred weapon, the only one left for the defence of truth ; in fact, the solitary panacea for every vice and evil. "Yes," concludes the Poet, with a flourish—

in print in my second 'Dialogue,' and he ought to take it for no small one, since in it I couple him with Lord Bol[ingbroke]. As he shows a right sense of this, I may make him a third in my third 'Dialogue.'"

The compliment about the minister's treatment of his wife was a double-edged one, since her intrigues were notorious, and Sir Robert was despised as a complaisant husband.

The allusions to Walpole in this and the first "Dialogue" might have been suggested by the dedication of the *Rival Modes* to the Whig minister, the work of Pope's old enemy, Moore-Smythe. The dedicator says : "I mean, sir, to view you, after the close of a day spent in the assertion of liberty, indulging freedom to those who have the happiness to be more particularly near your person —as if the direction of your own family was a model of that great plan from which your wisdom will never suffer you to vary in the support of the British Establishment."

Yes, the last pen for Freedom let me draw,
When Truth stands trembling on the edge of law;
Here, last of Britons! let your names be read;
Are none, none living? let me praise the dead,
And for that cause which made your fathers shine,
Fall by the votes of their degenerate line.
F. Alas! alas! pray end what you began,
And write, next winter, more Essays on Man.

In a footnote to a later edition Pope says that "this was the last poem of the kind printed by our author with a resolution to publish no more; but to enter thus, in the most plain and solemn manner he could, a sort of *protest* against that insuperable corruption and depravity of manners, which he had been so unhappy as to live to see. Could he have hoped to have amended any, he had continued those attacks; but bad men were grown so shameless and so powerful that ridicule was become as unsafe as it were ineffectual. The poem raised him, as he knew it would, some enemies; but he had reason to be satisfied with the approbation of good men and the testimony of his own conscience."[1]

The poem, whatever its moral effect, seems to have been generally read, and found its way into unlikely hands. Hill says he met with it at the home of an old-fashioned country gentleman, who lived in a hole at the foot of a hill, like the cave of a captain of banditti. Hill confesses that he did not usually consider Pope's works in this vein as those that were most certain of the admiration of posterity, but he finds in this satire something

[1] Pope's resolution to write no more political satire was inspired by his fear of Government prosecution.

inexpressibly daring and generous. "It carries the acrimony of Juvenal, with the Horatian air of ease and serenity. It opposes just praise to just censure, and thereby doubles the power of either."

Swift was able to read the "Dialogue," though he complains (in a letter dated August 8) that he has entirely lost his memory, is incapable of conversation owing to his cruel deafness, and despairs of any cure.

"I have absolutely done with poetry for several years past, and even at my best times I could produce nothing but trifles. I therefore reject your compliments on that score, and it is no compliment in me; for I take your "Second Dialogue," that you lately sent me, to equal almost anything you ever writ; although I live so much out of the world, that I am ignorant of the facts and persons, which, I presume, are very well known from Temple Bar to St. James. . . ."

Pope, hard put to it for consolation, assured the dean that he lost little by not hearing such things as this idle and base generation had to tell him, nor could he lose much by forgetting what was then passing in the world. There were many still living who remembered the dean, and frequently mentioned him with affection and respect, among them Lords Orrery, Bathurst, Oxford, and Bolingbroke, to say nothing of Mrs. Blount. "Allow one woman to the list, for she is as constant to old friendships as any man is." There were several young men, too, "who love you unknown, who kindle at your fire, and learn by your genius. Nothing of you can die, nothing of you can decay,

nothing of you can suffer, nothing of you can be obscured or locked up from esteem and admiration, except what is at the deanery—just as much of you only as God made mortal."

In July Pope was gratified with a visit from his beloved Bolingbroke, who had come over to arrange about the sale of Dawley. In August Bolingbroke was laid up with a bilious fever, and on the 19th Pope wrote to Allen that the invalid had been ordered Bristol water, and would require to have four bottles sent twice a week.

"I hope, dear sir," he continues, "I need not tell you the pleasure it will always be to me to hear you are well and happy; those words only, without form, without ornament, without all affected circumstance and compliment, are sufficient to make an honest man's letter to an honest man agreeable, and worth a thousand of the prettiest things that can be said by all the courtiers and wits of the world. My own health is much as usual, enough to thank God for my being, not enough to squander away in excesses, which they miscall pleasures. If either you or Mr. Hook[1] would edify Dr. Cheyne, pray show him this one period, and add my services to him. I heard he was in London after he had left it and wished I had seen him at Twit'nam, where he should have eat sallads and yams and Porija's, a sort of potato or chestnut from the Isle of St. Christopher. Tell him, if ever I change my

[1] Nathaniel Hook the Younger. He was recommended by Pope to the Duchess of Marlborough, to write the "Account of her Conduct" at her own dictation. He also wrote a "Roman History" that was long admired.

religion, it shall be to his, or to the Quakers, I am not determined to which. . . . "[1]

As we learn from a letter to Bethel (July 31) Pope shortened his country holiday this year, in order that he might see as much as possible of Bolingbroke. The letters to Bethel nearly always contain a reference to "Mrs. Blount" and her perverseness. From the one in question it appears that—

"Mrs. Blount is at Kew; and so is her sister in the neighbourhood. They have left their house in town, and taken another, into which our friend has the resolution to go with them, the only resolution she has being to go counter to her friends' advice. I remonstrated to her in vain early enough. I see her less than usual, as she hath been constantly with Lady Gerard in town and at Kew, and as the distance from me thither exceeds my walking, and takes up four or five hours in going and coming. But the main reason is that I see there's no good to be done her, and she frets me too much, who am too seriously concerned for her."[2]

Half the effects of his friendship for "Mrs. Blount," he observes, are rendered unpracticable or disagreeable by malicious insinuations.

"It seems hard," he complains in a later letter, "that when two *friends* are in the same sentiments and wish the same things, they should not be happy together. But *Habit* is the mistress of the world, and, whatever is generally said, has more sway than *Opinion*. Yours confines you to the

[1] From the unpublished MS. [2] *Ibid.*

wolds of Yorkshire, mine to the banks of the Thames. And yet I think I have less dependence on others, and others less on me than most men I have ever known; so that I *should be* a free man. So should a female friend of ours; but *Habit* is her *goddess*, I wish I could not say worse—her *tyrant*: she not only obeys, but *suffers* under her; and Reason and Friendship plead in vain. Out of hell and out of habit, there is no redemption."

On June 30 Lord Orrery married *en secondes noces* Margaret Hamilton, daughter of John Hamilton, of Caledon. She is described as "the greatest fortune in the British dominions, and a lady of as many virtues." The bridegroom wrote to Mrs. Cæsar on July 6 that—"Lady Orrery is impatient to see so extraordinary a lady, who, like herself, scorns courts and courtiers, to admire Mr. Pope and the incomparable dean."[1]

Pope professed to have given up all hope of getting back his letters from Swift. The dean, forgetting that he had returned any by Lord Orrery, had written that "a great collection of $\frac{\text{my}}{\text{your}}$ letters to $\frac{\text{you}}{\text{me}}$ are put up and sealed, and in some very safe hand." This slip of the pen proved another weapon in the hands of the poet when he desired to prove that he could not possibly have published the second volume of his "Correspondence." Pope assures Lord Orrery that he shall now leave the matter to chance or Providence with as much temper as he can, which was no particular merit, considering that he had the bulk of his letters in his own hands.

[1] From the unpublished MS.

In the course of the autumn Pope had a visit from Allen, who warmly pressed him to come to Bath in the winter, and make Prior Park his head-quarters. Pope replied that he would gladly pay a visit to Bath if the Court were not there. "It has been thrice my fate to be dispossest of my own house, when there was one at Hampton Court, but when the Bath is a private place, such as it was in the Court of King Bladud, I will come and live with you."

The poet explains that he is going to insert his Dialogues "Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight" into the body of his works, and adds: "I have found a virtue in you more than I certainly knew before, till I had made experiment of it—I mean humility. I must therefore, in justice to my own conscience of it, bear testimony to it—and change the epithet I first gave you of *low-born* to *humble*. I shall take care to do you the justice to tell everybody this change was not made at yours, or at any friend's request for you, but my own knowledge you merited it."

CHAPTER LIV

1739

Crousaz and the "Essay on Man"—Warburton's Defence—Letter to Swift—Martha Blount—The Prince and Mr. Lyttelton—The State of the Opposition—Bristol and Widcombe

THE "Essay on Man" had been translated into French, and attracted a good deal of attention abroad, but the fallacies in the reasoning could hardly escape the notice of Continental readers, who were logically better equipped than their English contemporaries. A Monsieur Crousaz, Professor of Mathematics and Philosophy at the University of Lausanne, wrote an "Examen of Mr. Pope's Essay, showing that it was founded on Leibnitz's system, and giving an account of the Fatalists, with a Confutation of their opinions, and an Illustration of the Doctrine of Free Will." The Professor proved, to his own satisfaction, that "the reasoning of the 'Essay on Man' led to fatalistic conclusions, destructive of the foundations of natural religion." The English translation of Crousaz's book, which appeared in 1738, was the work of Elizabeth Carter.[1]

[1] The blue-stocking, noted for her translation of Epictetus, published in 1758. When she translated Crousaz's work she was only 22.

Pope had been prepared for the accusation that his teaching was tinged with Deism, but he was dismayed at what was nothing less than a charge of Atheism. Here was a new weapon in the hands of his enemies—a weapon, moreover, against which he was incapable of defending himself.[1] His relief therefore was proportionately great when a new champion came to his aid. This was William Warburton, the *protégé* of Sutton, the friend of Theobald, and formerly, as we have seen, an adverse critic both of the Shakespeare edition and the "Essay on Man." Warburton had lately published the first volume of his "Divine Legation of Moses," a work which had made some sensation in ecclesiastical circles on account of its learning and its paradox. The reason for Warburton's sudden *volte-face* with regard to Pope has never been explained. He was not personally acquainted with the poet, and apparently had nothing to gain from his championship except a bold advertisement. However that might be, Warburton undertook to defend the orthodoxy of the "Essay on Man" against the criticisms of Crousaz, in a series of six Letters which appeared in a periodical review called *The Works of the Learned*. His "cock-sure" methods and the pedantic verbosity of his style helped in some measure to disguise the sophistries of his arguments, and though he could hardly have hoped to convince a trained theologian, Pope was more than satisfied with the

[1] In 1738 he had published "The Universal Prayer" "to show that his system was founded in free-will and terminated in piety." The composition did not have the desired effect, being generally called the "Deist's Prayer."

line taken by counsel for the defence. On February 2 he wrote to Warburton:

"I cannot forbear to return you my thanks for your animadversion on Mr. Crousaz: though I doubt not it was less a regard to me, than to candour and truth, which made you take the pains to answer so mistaken a man. I fear indeed he did not attack me on quite so good a principle: and whenever I see such a vein of uncharitableness and vanity in any work, whether it concerns me or another, I am always ready to thank God to find it accompanied with as much weakness.[1] But this is what I should never have exposed myself, because it concerned myself: and therefore I am the more obliged to you for doing it.

"I will not give you the unnecessary trouble of adding here to the defence you have made of me (though much might be said on the article of the passions in the second book). Only it cannot be unpleasant to you to know that I never in my life read a line of Leibnitz,[2] nor understood there was such a term as Præ-established Harmony, till I found it in Mon. Crousaz's book.

"I am, sir, with a due esteem for your abilities and for your candour (both of which I am no

[1] It was characteristic of Pope to think that any man who criticised his work adversely must be moved by feelings of vanity and uncharitableness.

[2] This was probably true, but Bolingbroke had studied Leibnitz, and Pope had studied Bolingbroke. Warburton had tried to prove that "the doctrine of Optimism advanced in the poem might have been derived from Plato, who maintained the freedom of the will, quite as well as from Leibnitz, who denied it." He attributed the obscurity or ambiguity of certain passages to the defectiveness of the translation.

stranger to from your other writings as well as this). Your most obliged, etc."

In April Pope was writing to thank his ally for two more instalments of the defence. The third Letter, in particular, was so clear, short, and full, that he thought M. Crousaz ought never to have another answer, and deserved none so good.

"I can only say," he adds, "you do him too much honour, and me too much right, so odd as the expression seems, for you have made my system as clear as I ought to have done, and could not. It is indeed the same system as mine, but illustrated with a ray of your own, as they say our natural body is the same still when it is glorified. I am sure I like it better than I did before, and so will every man else. I know I meant just what you explain, but I did not explain my own meaning so well as you. You understand me as well as I do myself, but you express me better than I could express myself."

Throughout his life Pope had felt the need of a stronger, more masculine mind to cling to and rest upon. Swift, Bolingbroke, Atterbury, Arbuthnot, had all a much fuller measure of manhood than himself, and were all now practically lost to him. In Warburton he had found a strong, hard-hitting, thick-skinned "bully," who was willing and able to fight for him, and behind whose broad back he could find shelter. There is something quite pathetic in the hysterical gratitude which the poet poured out upon the champion whom he had never seen.[1]

[1] Pope's first meeting with Warburton did not take place till the spring of 1740.

The gazetteers had given Pope some offence at this time, and though he affected to despise such assailants, he complained of the injury he had received to his old correspondent, Aaron Hill, who was a friend of Samuel Richardson's, the printer of *The Gazette*.[1]

"I did not recollect, until you told me," replied Hill, "that the *Gazettes* were printed by Mr. R[ichardson]; I am acquainted with none of the authors; not so much as with any one of their names; and as to Mr. R[ichardson] himself (among whose virtues I place it, that he knows and considers you rightly), there should be nothing imputed to the printer, which is imposed *for*, not *by* him, on his papers, but was never impressed on his mind. I am very much mistaken in his character, or he is a plain-hearted, sensible, and good-natured honest man. I believe when there is anything put into his presses with a view to such infamous slander as that which you so justly despise, he himself is the only man wounded; for I think there is an openness in his spirit that would even repel the profits of his business, when they were to be the consequence of making war upon excellence."

In April Swift, who was not yet quite sunk in darkness, sent a letter of introduction by his cousin Mr. Dean Swift, whom he described as the most valuable member of his family. This, however, was no very great recommendation in the eyes of the dean, who confesses himself utterly void of natural affection. With a view, evidently, to cheer-

[1] Samuel Richardson, the novelist, was still unknown to fame, though he had reached the age of 40. He was to emerge from obscurity the following year with the publication of "Pamela."

ing his unhappy friend, Pope wrote a long letter in reply to the above, and condescended, for once, to send all the "news" he could think of, as well as some details of his own personal history.

Lord Bolingbroke, he reports, has just sold Dawley for £26,000, and proposes to himself a very agreeable plan of life in the finest country of France: reading and writing five hours a day, and hunting twice a week. He is seriously set upon writing some parts of the history of his own times, which he has begun by a noble Introduction, presenting a view of the whole state of Europe, from the Pyrenean Treaty.

Swift had inquired how Pope was now situated with regard to the Court, and the poet replies:

"I keep my own walk, and deviate from it to no Court. The prince shows me a distinction beyond any merit or pretence on my part; and I have received a present from him of some valuable marble heads of poets for my library, and some urns for my garden. . . .[1] The Duchess of Marlborough makes great court to me; but I am too old for her, mind and body. Yet I cultivate some young people's friendship, because they may be honest men. . . . There is a Lord Cornbury, a

[1] The following undated note from Lyttelton to Pope has been attributed to the year 1740, but it must belong to this year—1739:

"Dear Sir,—Since my last I have received his Royal Highness's commands to let you know that he has a mind to present you with some urns or vases for your garden, and desires you would write me word what number and size would suit you best. You may have six small ones for your Laurel Circus, or two large ones to terminate points, as you like best. He wants to have your answer soon. Adieu, my dearest friend. Yours most affectionately."

Lord Polwarth, a Mr. Murray, and one or two more, with whom I would never fear to hold out against all the corruption in the world."

His chief cares are his health and his amusements. The first is better as to headaches, but worse as to weakness and nerves.

"The mornings are my life; in the evenings I am not dead indeed, but sleep and am stupid enough: I love reading still, better than conversation: but my eyes fail, and at the hours when most people indulge in company I am tired, and find the labour of the past day sufficient to weigh me down. So I hide myself in bed, as a bird in his nest, much about the same time, and rise and chirp the earlier in the morning."

In his capacity as a writer, Pope professes to be fast sinking into prose. Since his Dialogues of "Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight," he has written but ten lines for the new edition of "The Dunciad," which is usually reprinted about once in two years. The new lines referred to the offending gazetteers, who were placed among the authors who dived for prizes in the mud of Fleet Ditch.[1]

[1] The following are the new lines:

Next plunged a feeble but a desp'rate pack,
With each a sickly brother at his back:
Sons of a day! just buoyant on the flood,
Then numbered with the puppies in the mud.
Ask ye their names? I could as soon disclose
The names of these blind puppies as of those.
Fast by, like Niobe (her children gone)
Sits Mother Osborne, stupefy'd to stone!
And monumental brass this record bears:
"These are—ah no! these were, the gazetteers!"

Osborne was the pseudonym of Thomas Pitt, who wrote in the Ministerial papers.

As for the few friends still surviving, common to both Pope and Swift, there was Mr. Jervas, who had just returned from a journey to Italy in search of health ; and there was Dr. Arbuthnot's daughter, who did not degenerate from the humour and goodness of her father.

"I love her much," says the poet. "She is like Gay, very idle, very ingenious, and inflexibly honest. Mrs. Patty Blount is one of the most considerate and mindful of women in the world towards others, the least so in regard to herself. She speaks of you constantly. I scarce know two more women worth naming to you. The rest are ladies, run after music, and play at cards. . . ."

On April 17 Pope writes to Ralph Allen that he is crippled by rheumatism, but his heart and spirit are as ready as his flesh is weak. He is quite left to himself now that my Lord Bolingbroke has executed his deeds for the sale of Dawley, and returned to France.

"God knows," he adds, "if ever I may see again the greatest man I ever knew, and one of the best friends.[1] But this I know, that no man is so well worth taking any journey to see, to any man who truly knows what he is. I have done so these thirty years, and cannot be deceived in this point, whatever I may be in any other man's character. If you and I could live so long, I think we should never complain of one another. Of how few can I say the one, or think the other ! . . ."

[1] Pope used to speak of Bolingbroke as "the strayed denizen of another world," and declared that a comet might have come to fetch him home, "as a coach comes to one's door for other visitors."

His "guide, philosopher, and friend" having departed, there was nothing to keep the poet at Twickenham, and by July 4 he had arrived at one of his favourite country houses, Stowe, whence he wrote to Martha Blount a letter which has the ring of genuine and tried affection instead of the empty gallantry of his earlier effusions.

"Though I never saw this place in half the beauty and perfection it now has," he assures her, "I want to leave it to hasten my return towards you; or otherwise I could pass three months in agreeable rambles and slow journeys. . . . This garden is beyond all description in the new part of it. I am every hour in it but dinner and night, and every hour envying myself the delight of it, because not partaken by you, who would *see* it better, and consequently enjoy it more. . . . You might be more at your disposal than usually; for every one takes a different way, and wanders about till we meet at noon. All the mornings we breakfast and dispute; after dinner, and at night, music and harmony; in the garden, fishing; no politics and no cards, nor much reading. This agrees exactly with me, for the want of cards sends us early to bed. I have no complaints, but that I wish for you and cannot have you. I will say no more—but that I think *of* you and *for* you as I ever did and ever shall, present or absent. I can really forget everything besides."

The letter concludes in lover-like style:

"Adieu, once more. I am going to dream of you."

It is probable that Pope kept up a regular

correspondence with Martha Blount when he was separated from her, but comparatively few of his letters to her at this period have seen the light. It is hard to write long letters, he complains, when he has nothing to tell but what "Mrs. Blount" should believe as a matter of course. He reminds her that she has often rebuked him for talking too much about himself and his own motions, and it would be more absurd to write than to talk of such trifles. He says that he is extremely well in health; in fact, he never expects to be better in anything "except my constitution be mended, or you made happier. I think we have both of us the ingredients about us to make us happy. Your natural moderation is greater than mine; yet I have no sort of ambition or vanity that costs me an uneasy moment. Your temper is much more cheerful; and that temper joined with innocence, and a consciousness of not the least inclination to hurt, or disposition to envy another, is a lasting security of that calm state of mind which nothing can take from you, not sickness nor age itself."

Mr. Lyttelton at Hagley, General Dormer at Rousham, and Lord Bathurst at Cirencester, were each visited in turn, and then the poet tried the effect of a cure, first at Bristol and afterwards at Bath. The Prince of Wales honoured Lord Bathurst with a visit after Pope had left, and on October 25 Mr. Lyttelton wrote to the poet:

"We are just returned from my Lord Bathurst's, where his R. H. gave and received much satisfaction. I wish you had been of the party, because I know he wishes it, and because he cannot be too often

in your company. Don't complain of your being *useless* to him: a friend is never so, especially to a prince. When the power in conversation of pleasing is directed to the purpose of instructing, and a right understanding joined to a good heart, one *in his station* may draw the greatest services, as well as the greatest delight, from one in yours.[1] . . . . I know how difficult it is to draw you to a Court, even to a Court without guards and under persecution. You may remember that I was forced to compel you to go and dine at Kew the last time you was there. And yet there never was a morning better spent by you—no, not in conversing with Lord Bolingbroke."

Pope replied that the prince's visit to Cirencester had been too sudden for a letter which he had intended to write to Lord Bathurst on that occasion. This document was to have contained instructions to a great man how to treat a prince when Fortune gave him the leading of one, especially if the prince happened to be a little short-sighted. He would have told his lordship to practise on the prince the two great arts that he so successfully practised on other people: "that of making him imagine what is a highway or common field to all his subjects, to be his own walks and royalties, and that of imposing upon him what was the work of our own hands but yesterday, for the venerable structure of our ancestors."

Pope proceeds to describe a recent conference

[1] Pope was in the habit of falling asleep in company, and once was seen to be dozing when the prince was discoursing to him about poetry.

with the leader of the Opposition, Sir William Wyndham. Wyndham realised the indignity and danger of the present state of the Opposition. He felt that this was the natural consequence of the neglect of a warning from a friend,[1] and that the party would be drawn off from the original principles on which it was founded by two persons,[2] one of whom never desired the public good, while the other only desired it by fits and starts. Sir William feared that these two persons would, by their own overbearing, and the indolence of others, get a sort of prescriptive right to a negative in all the proceedings, and that the Opposition would become nothing better than a bubble party. The part taken by the prince opened an opportunity for mending these errors. If he became the head of the party, the power of those "two persons" would cease.[3]

"Pray assure your master of my duty and service," concludes Pope. "They tell me he has everybody's love already. I wish him popular, but not familiar, and the glory of being beloved, not the vanity of endeavouring it too much. I wish him at the head of the only good party in the kingdom, that of honest men. I wish him head of no other party, and I think it a nobler situation

[1] Bolingbroke, no doubt.

[2] Pulteney and Carteret.

[3] Sir William Wyndham is further quoted in this letter as having said "That it is proper to continue to live with these two persons in all the same terms of friendly intercourse, and with the same appearance of intimacy, may so strengthen the plea to it by showing how extremely they have been trusted, deferred to, and comply'd with."

This was the kind of diplomacy that would appeal to Pope.

to be at the head of the best men of the kingdom than at the head of any kingdom upon earth. For one is only a proof of his birth, the other of his merit."

November found the poet at Bristol, which he thought a very disagreeable city, with no civilised company in it, save only the merchants, of whom he heard no great character. "The streets are as crowded as London," he wrote to Martha Blount, "but the best image I can give you of it is, it is as if Wapping and Southwark were ten times as big, or all their people ran into London." The early hours and the simple regimen suited his health so well that he would have stayed longer but for the fact that there were no conveniences for the winter. Hence, the end of the month finds him comfortably installed with the devoted Allens at Prior Park.

Patty was having a gay time in town, but her account of her dissipations roused Pope's disapproving ire. "If your friends would but do as most other people's," he observes, "invite you once to dinner, and then not care if you were hanged, it would be better." It is the life of an animal, he protests, to spend the day first in dressing the body, then dragging it out, stuffing it with food, washing it out with tea, wagging the tongue, and so to bed. Pope was never famous for consistency, and therefore it is not surprising to find that, in the course of the same letter, he shows annoyance at the omission of the Duchess of Queensberry to ask Miss Blount to a ball. At forty-nine a woman's dancing days might be supposed at an end,

but apparently this was not the case with Patty, for Pope writes:

"Pray ask the Duchess of Queensberry (if you can ask her without seeing her) what she means by forgetting you are as good a dancer as some she invites. And ask my Lady Marchmont to carry you to see how well her lord performs."

At Widcombe Pope found a haven of rest, and the best chance of restoring his health. His word was law with his simple hosts, his theories of gardening being accepted in humble faith, and carried out to the letter; while any benevolent scheme he might have in his head was sure of support from "low-born Allen."

"At Widcombe," he tells Bethel, "I shall live, read, and plant away my time, leaving the madness of the little town beneath, as I've done the madness of the great town behind me. I am only sorry I could not bring a few righteous people along with me. . . . I wish Mrs. Blount, to whose health it would certainly conduce, would have been here, where she might find more quiet and better countenances than in her own family. A few honest people is all the world is worth; but you shall never find them agree to stand by one another, and despise the rest; which, if they would, they would prevail over all the follies and the influence of the world. But they comply with what is round about them, and that being almost sure to be folly or misery, they must partake of it."

CHAPTER LV

1740

Richard Savage—"Seventeen Hundred and Forty"—Political "Correspondence"—Lines to the Grotto

FOR some months past Pope had been trying to befriend the unhappy Savage, who had come to the end of his resources, and had wearied the patience of patrons and comrades. The death of the Queen had lost him a pension of £50, which he received from her for an annual poem, published under his assumed title of Volunteer Laureate. Lord Tyrconnel, who had protected him for a couple of years, had cast him off.[1] Sir Robert Walpole had failed to keep some vaguely worded pledge to find him a place, and his friends were tired of subscribing for an edition of works that was never published. As a last hope, he proposed to rewrite his tragedy, *Sir Thomas Overbury*, and bring it upon the stage. The only objection to this course was that he had nothing to live upon while the work was in hand.

[1] Lord Tyrconnel, out of compassion for Savage's misfortunes, had taken him into his house, and made him an allowance of £200 a year. But this arrangement only lasted two years. At the end of that time Lord Tyrconnel's patience was worn out by Savage's disorderly habits.

Savage's distress being now publicly known, some of his few remaining friends concerted measures for his relief. It was proposed that he should retire to Wales, and live there upon an allowance of £50 a year, of which Pope, it appears, guaranteed £20.[1] Savage accepted the offer, but not in the same spirit that it was offered. His friends intended that he should spend the rest of his life at Swansea, while he proposed to remain in retirement only till his tragedy was finished.

Pope had written to Allen in the early summer of 1739 that a journey to Bath at that time would be incompatible with some offices of friendship.

"One of these," he continues, "is what I intend to make you partake in, the sending a man to be saved, both in this world and the next (I hope). He is to cost me £10 a year as long as he thinks fit to live regularly, and if you will let me cost you as much, we shall want few further aids, and I believe you don't care how long our benevolence may last, though I think it can't many years. I told you of him last spring, and he sets forth from this world for a better; that is, from London to a remote country in Wales, in a fortnight; but we are to advance him nothing but by an agent of mine in that neighbourhood, quarterly, after he is settled there. . . ."[2]

Savage left London in July 1739, with fifteen guineas in his pocket; but at the end of a fortnight

[1] Johnson and others suppose that Pope allowed Savage £20 a year out of his own pocket, but, from the unpublished letters to Allen, it appears that he was personally only responsible for £10.

[2] From the unpublished MS.

he was still upon the road, and, having spent all his money, could not proceed farther without a remittance. His friendly subscribers sent him more money, and he reached Bristol, where, not being able to obtain a passage at once to Swansea, he made friends among the merchants, and, finding himself caressed and treated as a famous man, he gave himself up to social pleasure, and thought no more of Swansea or the tragedy. At the same time he complained so bitterly of the conduct of his friends in London that many of them withdrew their subscriptions, and little was left him but the £20 paid by Pope.

During his visit to Bristol in November 1739, Pope had written to Mallet[1] that Mr. Savage was still to be found there, but he could not persuade himself to find him, thinking that it would give the exile some confusion to meet a friend to whom he had broken his word. "But I wrote him a very sorrowful letter, which he answered in a higher key than I deserved, and a much harsher than his other friends deserved; however, it ended in a promise to go in a few days to Swansea. I replied in sober strain, and laid hold (only) on that circumstance, as the one upon which I could fix any good to himself. And I have renewed my orders since for prompt payment of my part of the subscription for his retirement (for so he calls it) to his own hands

[1] David Mallet, dramatist and miscellaneous writer. He had just made a success with his tragedy, *Mustapha*. The arrangements for paying Savage the subscription seem to have been chiefly in the hands of Mallet and Thompson. It may be noted that Mallet flattered Pope in his lifetime and abused him after his death.

this Christmas. For he declares against all measures by which any of us pretend to put him into a state of infancy, and the care of another."

On January 25 Pope wrote again to Mallet that he feared "nothing can be said *to*, or done *for*, this poor unhappy man, who will not suffer himself to have a friend. But I will immediately send him another £10 (besides my own which is paid him), and take what money you can collect in repayment. . . . I have really taken more pains not to affront him than if my bread had depended on him. He would be to be forgiven, if it was misfortune only, and not pride, that made him captious. All I can say is, I wish Providence would be kind to him in our stead; but till then he is miserable."

Though Pope published nothing in 1740, his brain was hard at work planning great schemes for the future. He contemplated writing a "History of the Rise and Progress of English Poetry," and even drew up a kind of synopsis, dividing the poets into different schools or classes. He also had an idea for a great epic poem, of which Brutus was to be the hero, besides two moral poems on the evils of arbitrary power and the folly of ambition.

Among the papers left at his death was found an unfinished satire called "Seventeen Hundred and Forty," which was probably begun in 1739, after the secession of the Opposition from the House of Commons, as a protest against Walpole's parliamentary methods. Inspired, like his other political satires, by Bolingbroke, this fragment breathes the language of disappointed rage, and pours vituperation on Carteret, Pulteney, the Jaco-

bites, and all who hindered the ambitious schemes of Bolingbroke and added to the difficulties of the Opposition. The party had suffered from the death of Wyndham, and the absence from the House of Commons of Lord Polwarth, who had succeeded his father as Lord Marchmont, while his supporters had begun to realise that their Patriot Prince was but a broken reed.

Because his own political friends were unsuccessful Pope thought that the country was doomed to destruction. The following lines illustrate his point of view :

> The plague is on thee, Britain, and who tries
> To save thee, in the infectious office, *dies.*
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Good Marchmont's fate tore Polwarth from thy side,
> And thy last sigh was heard when Wyndham died.

As for Carteret, he is—

> His own proud dupe, thinks monarchs things
> Made just for him, as other fools for kings.

while—

> Through clouds of passion Pulteney's views are clear,
> He foams a patriot to subside a peer ;
> Impatient sees his country bought and sold,
> And damns the market where he takes no gold.

Pope's letters to his political friends at this time are full of the rankest pessimism. He professes to find a melancholy satisfaction in the fact that Marchmont has temporarily retired, owing to his father's death, from public life, since there was no man left worthy for him to work with.

"I do not know now," he writes on June 22,

"whose death to wish for; I know whose death I should have wished, some years ago, to have prevented the mischiefs that are now remediless, and whose lives to have enjoyed better times; but in certain situations it is happier for honest men to die than live. . . . We do not live, my lord, under the Jewish dispensation, nor are we to imagine the most dirty, rascally race on earth are the favourite people of God. You know when they were so, after they had provoked Him enough, He punished them with an absolute king; He has done so much to all Europe of late days; and if Britain should be the only corner left still free, do you think it will not be more His goodness than our merit? . . .

"I who have really no other, or no equal merit to that of loving or pursuing merit in and through others, do sincerely wish myself in Scotland or the forests contemplating some *one good mind* preferably to the melancholy study of the world, or reading the very worst sort of books, men, and manners. The very gazetteer is more innocent and better bred. When he abuses the brave or insults the dead, he lays the fault another day upon his *printer*; but our great men cannot so much as lay their brutalities and ill-breeding upon their *porters* and *footmen*; they hate honour openly, and pray devoutly for the removal of all virtue. Their prayers have been pretty well heard, and when one or two more are gone the nation will be much of a piece. I could then be glad to travel, and I could then be more glad if your lordship would travel. . . . I am seriously desirous to run from my country, if

you will run from yours,[1] and study Popery and slavery abroad a while, to reconcile ourselves to the Church and State we may find at home on our return. . . ."

The next letter to Marchmont shows a sudden change of tone. In consequence of the schism in the Opposition, Lyttelton and others of the thorough-going supporters of the prince were anxious for the return of Bolingbroke and Marchmont, though neither of them had a seat in either House. But it was supposed that their influence would help to counteract that of Carteret and Pulteney, who desired, in view of a possible change of Ministry, to seek the favour of the Court. Bolingbroke declared that he could be of no more use, which was probably true; but he, like Lyttelton, seemed to think that Marchmont's return would be desirable.

Prompted by his friends, Pope, who never objected to contradicting himself, wrote off to urge Marchmont to quit sulking in his tent and arm himself at all points for the fray. If he knew how he was regarded by his friends he would not stay in Scotland a day longer. He was not to have the least doubt of Lord Bolingbroke's professions of friendship, for his lordship had just written to the following effect:

"What a star has our minister![2] Wyndham dead; Marchmont disabled! The loss of Marchmont and Wyndham to our country! I take for

[1] Scotland.

[2] He means, of course, how lucky Walpole was to lose two of his ablest opponents.

granted that you have a correspondence with Lord Marchmont. I writ to him the other day; but do you write to him. I wish the event of Wyndham's death may not determine him to settle in Scotland. God forbid! Do not fail, when you write, to tell him how much I honour his virtue and his talents, and love his person. He and I and you are by different causes in much the same situation—lovers of our country, grieved at her present state, and unable to help her."

Bolingbroke, continues Pope, had declared his readiness to return on the first probable occasion to do his country any service, and he begs Lord Marchmont to take this resolution for an example. He at least may keep alive virtue and honour in the breasts of a few young men, who could hand them on to posterity, and shake the souls of guilty wretches, who else would entail their profligacy on all future generations.

"Come then, my lord," he concludes, "to those who love and want you; appear among those who fear, who hate, and yet respect you; make the noblest of figures, independent among slaves, and amiable with great talents; the fruit and exercise of which, if you are deprived of at present, it may make you less *envied*, but cannot make you less *esteemed*, either by friend or enemy."

But Marchmont, like Bolingbroke, felt that in his situation he could be of no present use to his party. Pope, who thought proper to address his political friends in the extravagant style that he had once kept for his women friends, sent a

high-flown rhapsody to Bolingbroke on the state of public affairs, in the course of which he remarks :

"Be others as honest as they will, they cannot be so generous as you. They must, if good counsels prevail, reap benefits you will not reap ; and may expect to see those fruits of which you can see the blossoms only. The monks and ascetics tell us we are not attained to perfection till we serve God for His sake only, not for our own—not even for the hope of heaven. You really would serve men in this manner, and many whom you have no obligations to love, and who have done their best to ruin you, all in their turns. It must, therefore, be called by its true name, not so much love to your country as to God. It is not patriotism, but downright piety, and instead of celebrating you as a poet should, I would, if I were Pope, canonise you, whatever all the advocates for the devil could say to the contrary."

In this letter Pope encloses his famous "Lines to his Grotto," with the explanation that, "next to patching up my constitution, my great business has been to patch up a Grotto (the same you have so often sat in in times past under my house) with all the varieties of nature underground—spars, minerals, and marbles. I hope to live to philosophise with you in this museum, which is now a study for virtuosi, and a scene for contemplation. At least I am resolved to have it remembered that you were there, as you will see from the verses I dare to set over it."

The lines are here appended :

Thou who shalt stop where Thames' translucent wave
Shines a broad mirror through the shadowy cave ;
Where lingering drops from min'ral roofs distil,
And pointed crystals break the crystal rill,
Unpolished gems no ray on pride bestow,
And latent metals innocently glow,
Approach ; but awful ! Lo ! th' Egerian grot,[1]
Where, nobly pensive, St. John sate and thought ;
Where *British* sighs from dying Wyndham stole,
And the bright flame was shot thro' Marchmont's soul.
Let such, such only, tread this sacred floor
Who dare to love their country, and be poor.

[1] Warburton says that Pope is alluding to Numa's system of politics in this grot, assisted, as he gave out, by the nymph Egeria. Pope's Egeria was presumably the Princess of Wales, who was generally present at the Conferences.

CHAPTER LVI

1740

The Grotto—Proposed Publication of Correspondence with Swift—Visit to Prior Park

THE patching up of his Grotto was, as Pope told Bolingbroke, the chief amusement of his declining years, and numerous contributions of rock and spar were sent him by his friends in the West of England. Ralph Allen was a generous donor, and Pope's letters to Widcombe are full of thanks for favours received, or suggestions that the great work is at a stand-still for want of more material.[1] On April 18, having received gifts of cider, Bristol water, and stone, the poet writes to Allen :

"For these little things, *little* in comparison of the other evidences of your goodwill to me (and little in comparison to those they would be if you sent me diamonds), for these, I say, I catch myself at the folly of thanking you. . . . The arrival of the *Happy Couple*,[2] loaded with what I am now fond of, makes me reflect on another, constantly charged with all that I love and value, all whose voyages

[1] Allen was the owner of stone quarries near Bath. He had invented a method of conveying large blocks of stone to the canal.

[2] The ship that brought the minerals.

I wish may be as prosperous! The ship thus named ought to be your own, but whether it be or not, no man will ever hear of it without thinking of you. . . .

"It would be almost a sin in me to conclude without a word of Mrs. Allen, and yet I have been thinking of her throughout this letter. Is there any need of naming her just over against the *Happy Couple?* Can I forget her a single day when I am always directed by her Almanack? Or can I help, when I see but one bottle on my table, to think what a number stood before us at hers? But pray let her not fancy, from my mention of these, that they are all I remember her for, any more than suffer yourself to think that when I thank you for the water, wine, alabaster, spars and snakestones, they were the best things I ever had from you. . . ."[1]

Pope was anxious to finish the work in the course of the spring, but feared that a collection of Cornish mundics and other minerals would not arrive in time. However, on May 15 he had just received a fine cargo of spars from Penzance,[2] and his subterranean work was to begin in good earnest as soon as "Mr. Omer" arrived. Mr. Omer was apparently a rock-work expert in the employ of Allen, who was lending him to start the improvements at Twickenham. In return for all these favours Pope gave the Allens

[1] From the unpublished MS.

[2] Sent by Dr. Borlase, the Cornish antiquary, who had the living of St. Just, near Penzance. He published an essay on Cornish diamonds.

one of the much-sought-after puppies of the famous Bounce,[1] and also presented them with pine-apples of his own growing.

"It is my firm resolution," he wrote in May, "to inhabit the rooms at the end of your gallery one fortnight at least in September, and as much longer as I can, to see your gardens finished (ready for Mrs. Allen's grotto and cascade the following year). I must inquire next after her and your own health, after that of the elms we planted on each side of your lawn, and of the little wood-work to join one wood to the other below, which I hope you planted this spring. I have suffered more, in my garden as well as my body, since the end of the great frost than before.[2] But what wonder? I was then in your care, and since in my own. Yet, upon the whole, my garden would look well, and I should be well, if the sun would but shine upon us. And let us pray that it may do so now, both upon the just and the unjust, for all equally want it."[3]

By the middle of June the work on the Grotto was temporarily suspended, owing to lack of

[1] In an unpublished letter for May 5 Pope says: "A young Bounce is ready for you at my Lord Oxford's. The sooner you send for the dog the better; but care must be taken: he can but just lap, and I know your humanity extends to all the creatures that have life." In a later letter he says: "I hope the puppy is by this time arrived at Widcombe, to be a guard to you in your house and a companion to you in your walks, as his ancestor, Bounce, is to me."

[2] In the winter of 1739-40 the frost lasted from Christmas Day till February 16. The Thames was frozen over, and covered with shops.

[3] From the unpublished MS.

minerals. "Till I can procure more materials from the mines and from the quarries," wrote Pope to Allen on the 16th, "my mine adventure (like the adventure of the bear and the fiddle) must break off in the middle. However, it is some satisfaction that, as far as I've gone, I am content; and that is all a mortal man can expect, for no man finishes any view he has, or any scheme he projects, but by halves—

> And life can nothing more supply
> Than just to plan our projects, and to die.

"Those men indeed who marry and settle, undertake far more; they undertake for future ages, and Sam and Betty are in for life, and afterwards, if they have children. I am content to leave nothing but my works behind me; which (whether good or evil) *will follow me*, as St. John expresses it. As to my *mines* and my *treasures*, they must go together, to God knows who! A sugar-baker or a brewer may have the house and gardens, and a booby that chanced to be my heir-at-law the other, except I happen to disperse it to the poor in my own time."

Allen took the hint about lack of material, and sent off another load of minerals. On July 16 Pope wrote to protest that the zeal his friend had shown in sending supplies cost too much for a mere piece of vanity, "for so our friends the Quakers would call it, unless I set a sentence of Scripture in the Grotto:

> Oh come, and see the works of the Lord."

He wishes that this sentence might serve as an

exhortation to the Allens to come to Twickenham, since it would be impossible for him to get to Bath before the end of September.

"I have been obliged for a very good reason (the health of a friend who was prescribed to travel for his life)[1] to go with him as far as Southampton, where I think I have taken my last sight of that place which has so long been a pleasing one to me. For I am very sure I have not much strength left, nor much life; all it can allow me will be to see you, and (if I can stretch it so far) one friend more abroad. In either of your houses, if I drop, I drop contented; otherwise Twit'nam will see the last of me. [I am in no pain, but my case is not curable, and must in course of time, as it does not diminish, become painful first and then fatal. And what of all this? Without any distemper at all, life itself does so, and is itself a pain if continued long enough. So that Providence is equal, even between what seem so wide extremes as health and infirmity."]

He is sending Allen some pine-apples, and hears of another cargo of stone for the Grotto.

"I may properly be said to be *loaded* with your favours; but that they may not be *heaped upon my head*, I have taken care to secure them by many cramps; and as soon as I get a few more things from Cornwall I shall finish this *last* of the laborious baubles of my life."[2]

In the early part of this year the long-desired

[1] Probably Bethel, who was obliged to go to Italy on account of his asthma.

[2] Unpublished, except for the passage in brackets.

meeting had taken place between Pope and Warburton, and the friendship, begun on paper, had been cemented in the flesh. In April Pope had written to his champion to express his delight at the prospect of seeing him.

"Let us meet," he says, "like men who have been many years acquainted with each other, whose friendship is not to begin, but to continue. All forms should be past, when people know each other's mind so well. I flatter myself you are a man after my own heart, who seeks content only from within."

The morning after Warburton arrived in town Pope sent him the following note:

"The desire I unfeignedly have to pass what time I can with you would have brought me to your lodging this morning, but I thought you would misinterpret it. Ceremony, the only use of which (as a modern said well) is to keep people that care not for one another at a distance. To manifest the contrary to you, I wish you would dine to-day with me at a friend's house, a little after three. He is one, I think, you will like, because I have loved him on twenty years' experience: I mean my Lord Bathurst, in St. James's Square. . . . ."[1]

The first interview took place in Lord Radnor's garden at Twickenham, and Dodsley, who was present, was surprised at the flattering manner in which the poet received his champion. The pair seem to have resolved themselves at once into a mutual admiration society of two. Warburton de-

[1] From the unpublished MS.

clared that Pope was the only poet who had discovered the art of uniting wit to sublimity, and Pope said that Warburton was the greatest general critic he had ever known, and the most capable of "seeing through all the possibilities of things." With this interview the foundation of Warburton's fortune was made, for Pope not only introduced him to Lord Bathurst but also to Murray, who appointed him Preacher of Lincoln's Inn, and to Allen, whose niece he married.

During the summer Pope was busy with a new and elaborate plot for publishing his "Correspondence" with Swift. He wished to make it appear that the dean, whose memory was now totally gone, was entirely responsible for the publication of the book. He conducted the negotiations by much the same methods that had succeeded so well with Curll. In June a printed volume of the "Correspondence" was sent anonymously to Swift, with a covering letter to the effect that the senders honoured the dean so deeply that they could not resist the temptation which had fallen in their way of preserving from all accidents a copy of the enclosed papers, which gave so amiable a picture of his own excellent mind. As there was reason to fear that the letters would be lost to posterity after his death, if either of his two great friends got possession of them, they were here collected and submitted to his mature consideration. He was assured that there was no other copy in existence, and it was hoped that he would himself bestow it upon the public.

Swift, seeing that the book was already printed,

and dimly remembering, perhaps, that Pope had wished for some such monument of their friendship, sent the volume to his printer, Faulkener. Faulkener, unlike Curll, refused to publish it without Pope's permission, for which he wrote to ask. The poet took no notice of the request for a month,[1] and then wrote what he afterwards described as the "strongest negative." He told Faulkener that he could not tell whether the letters were genuine, and suggested that the book should be submitted to Lord Orrery. If his lordship saw nothing to object to in the letters, it was hinted that he might be able to obtain Pope's consent to the publication. This was a "strong negative" with a large loophole! In explaining the manœuvre to Orrery the poet says that he was only aiming at getting the book away from Faulkener. He admits that it was a kind of trick, "a thing I am sure you would not practise, except in extremities, and without any possible ill consequence or injury to any one."

Faulkener, thinking that a month's silence was tantamount to consent, had begun to print the letters, but he obediently stopped the press on receiving Pope's negative, and sent the volume to Lord Orrery with an explanation of the circumstances under which he had received it. The packet had been brought from England by a Mr. Gerrard, a Bath acquaintance of Pope's, and the dean imagined that it came from Twickenham. Faulkener was so eager to act in accordance with

[1] No doubt Pope thought that if Faulkener heard nothing, he would take silence for consent, and proceed with the printing.

Pope's wishes that he offered to send the volume to London in order that the poet might inspect and revise the letters. Pope shilly-shallied with this offer for a time. He desired nothing so much as to see the letters, but he was certain they would be published sooner or later in London, with or without his revision. He declared that the papers must have been stolen from the dean in Dublin, and tried to put the blame on to the shoulders of Mrs. Whiteway, Swift's cousin and housekeeper. Finally, he asked Orrery to undertake the revision of the letters, observing casually :

"I see no harm in Faulkener's printing such an edition, provided I do not revise it myself (which would be tantamount to publishing it) and when it is done by F. with the known consent of the dean, I may suffer it here without imputation as being really past my power to prevent. But all this while, my lord, guess in what situation I must be, who cannot get any sight or account what the things really are that the world are to read as mine! I wish your lordship did but in two words tell me what your opinion of them is, and whether there be anything offensive (very idle I am sure there must be) in my own."

This was shifting the responsibility for publication on to other shoulders, for Pope felt certain that Orrery would write and implore him to give these wonderful documents to the world. But Orrery, like Faulkener, was too honest to play the rôle that had been assigned to him. With a scrupulous candour which Pope must have found intensely irritating, he replied that the whole collection of

letters were, in his opinion, unworthy of publication. They were only private familiarities between friends, in which the public could not be interested. The great names affixed to them would raise expectations in people, and the subject-matter of the epistles would not answer those expectations. "In yours," he says, "there is nothing imprudent, nor can you write but what must please. Yet surely they were never meant for print. In the dean's are some sharp sayings of a very high nature, and what may give room for his enemies to alarm, if not to molest him. Lord Bolingbroke's show him a tender husband and a firm friend. I do not remember that any of his are to be objected to, except in the general objection to the whole, that they are trifling. Mr. Gay's do him no honour as a wit, but they are, as they must be, the letters of an honest man."

Pope was now obliged to take a different line. Though professing to be relieved by Orrery's account of the letters, he declares that he is sick and tired of the whole affair.

"There has been all along," he complains, "so much shuffling in this whole conduct that I can bear to cajole them no longer, and shall give it quite up. Upon the whole I am monstrously used, and their treachery and mean flattery is more provoking than the injury, great as it is. . . . For myself I can be indifferent if my letters are no more than dull, and free from any of those strokes which, in the carelessness of a familiar correspondence, may make any honest man uneasy who was never meant to see them."

The knowledge that the letters are familiar and

inoffensive has relieved him, he says, from apprehension, and rendered it unnecessary that he should make any alterations or omissions. He has decided that it will be best to leave the whole matter alone, since the book will infallibly be printed in London as well as Dublin. This was certainly true, for Pope published the English edition himself the following year. He announced, of course, that he was driven to this in self-defence. It is doubtful whether very much credence was given to his protestations by those who knew him best. Mrs. Whiteway, who had been practically accused of tampering with the dean's papers, sent Lord Orrery a letter of explanation and argument, in which she gave good reasons for her belief that the volume of letters emanated from Twickenham. Pope shrank from dealing directly with the points raised, but he also addressed to Orrery a narrative in which he gave his own version of the affair.

To his other friends, who knew nothing of the details, Pope was able to pose as a shockingly ill-used person. On October 3 he wrote to Allen a long letter about his plans for a visit to Widcombe. He had proposed to accompany Lord Chesterfield, as he could not travel alone on account of the "jumbling." But Chesterfield had set out too early, so that Pope found himself obliged to defer his visit until he could find another companion.

"My vexations about Dr. Swift's proceedings," he continues, "have fretted and employed me a good deal in writing to Ireland, and trying all the means possible to *retard* it, for it is past preventing, by his having (without asking my consent, or as

much as letting me see the book) printed most of it. They at last promised to send me the copy, and that I may correct or expunge what I will. This last would be of some use, but I dare not even do this, for they would say I *revised* it. And the bookseller writes that he has been at great charge about it. However, the dean, upon all I have said and written about it, has ordered him to submit to any expunctions I insist upon ; this is all I can obtain, and I know not whether to make any use of it or not. But as to your apprehension that any suspicion may arise of my being any way consenting or concerned in it,[1] I have the pleasure to tell you, the whole thing is so circumstanced and so plain, that it can never be the case. . . . If you can give me any advice, do. I wish I could show you what the dean's people, the women and the bookseller, have done and writ on my sending an absolute negative, and on the agency I have employed of some gentlemen to stop it, as well as threats of law, etc. The whole thing is too manifest to admit of any doubt in any man, how long this thing has been working ; how many tricks have been played with the dean's papers ; how they were secreted from him from time to time, while they feared his not complying with such a measure ; and how, finding his weakness increase, they have at last made him the instrument himself for their private profit ; whereas I believe before they only intended to do this after his death." [2]

[1] Evidently Allen had feared that the correspondence scandal of 1735 would be repeated.

[2] In an unpublished paragraph at the conclusion of this letter,

The terrors of the journey to Widcombe loomed ever larger in the eyes of the poet as the time for his departure drew near, and under one pretext or another he kept putting off the evil day. On October 14 he had quite decided to drive down in his little "chair," which would be useful to him at Widcombe, and help to secure his crazy person from cold in the garden and rockery.

"You'll see many of my friends at this time," he says, "who join with me in valuing you—Mr. Lyttelton, Lord Cornbury, Lord Bathurst, etc. If I have no hopes of finding the last of these gentlemen at his own house at Cirencester (as I fancy he will be little there while others are at Bath, and the Parliament so nigh), I must be content to see him in London, and as soon as I have just looked at them, before they grow too busy and too warm for me (who am only a bystander and no partisan, but only a well-wisher to my country, whoever prove its friends), I shall leave the place where I can do no good, and the people to whom I can do none, and fly to you, and think of posterity. . . ."[1]

On November 4 Pope was still at Twickenham, but, hearing that Allen had been ill, he wrote, in his impulsive fashion, that he would make arrangements to come at once if his friend desired his company.

"Your chariot shall meet me when you will at

Pope says: "My Grotto is now finished (I wish you could have seen it now) though still I could improve, had I more fine stone. It has cost infinitely more time and pains than I could have conceived; so true it is that 'every little thing to be done *well* requires a great deal.'"

[1] From the unpublished MS.

Newbury or Hungerford, and I will get thither in a day and a half. On Wednesday sennight I believe I may have the opportunity of a coach so as to be at Bath by Friday night. . . . If I can get Mr. Hooke or Vandiest,[1] if he were well enough, I will come. If not, I'll take any other means to be there in less than a week more. . . . I will be with you by the 25th at farthest, at all events. . . . My hearty thanks for your good offices to Mrs. Arbuthnot, who is the most honest of women. Let Mrs. Allen know they will not be the worse for each other's company; though a great wit said, 'No two women were ever acquainted without being so.'"[2]

This sounded like a definite arrangement, and Allen, simple man, took the poet at his word, and wrote that he would send his chariot to Newbury on the day appointed. Pope had wished it to appear that he was ready, at all hazards, to fly to his sick friend's bedside, but he had not expected his offer to be taken literally. On November 11 he writes, in great perturbation:

"I sent a letter by the Bath fly (as they call it) in hope it might reach you on Tuesday night, to prevent sending your chariot to Newbury, but fear it could not, and therefore have writ by this first post to Newbury to Mrs. Cary, to let your servants know I could not be there possibly, and to return home. Nothing can afflict me more. But sure my letter was express, that *I could not come unless*

[1] Van Diest, an artist employed by Allen. Probably a son of the Dutch painter, Adrian van Diest, who died in England in 1704.

[2] From the unpublished MS.

I coula procure somebody to go in Lord Chesterfield's coach."

He had been unable, he continues, to find a companion, and moreover had business of importance that would detain him another fortnight in town.

"But I would have left *had you been ill, and in any respect wanted or wished my coming.* I thought I expressed that particularly, and that unless you were so, I would take a *longer time*, and be *then* met by your chariot. . . .

"No words can tell the vexation this gives me. I am quite ashamed to put my friends to this trouble about me. I am really grown too infirm to be fit to undertake anything, or to be worth anything when I am with them. I think I'll take my chance, and get to you *as* I can, and *when* I can. For to write again, and appoint another time for you to renew all this trouble, I cannot answer to myself. It is certain, if Joseph did not attend, to ride with me in the chariot, I could not bear it. And to take my own John away for a *week* would destroy all my pine-apples for a whole season. Would to God I were like any other thing they call a man, and I could find my way to those I wish so much and so often to pass my life with. . . ."[1]

It was the beginning of December before a start was made, but Pope had discovered that his favourite, George Arbuthnot, was going to Bath at that time, and thought him worth waiting for, because "such company will render every jolt less sensible to me. Indeed, Mr. Cheselden told me plainly that a coach would be a hearse to me if I went in one alone. . . .

[1] From the unpublished MS.

"My sincere services to Mrs. Allen, Lady Peterborough, and Mrs. Arbuthnot. Why are there any other women? I hope *certain others* will be gone by next month."

Having solemnly vowed that he would never again ask for the chariot to meet him at Newbury, it is interesting to note that he writes on December 2, to explain that he has no means of getting beyond Newbury except in Allen's chariot! But he will infallibly be there, with Mr. Arbuthnot, on the 13th at dinner-time, if alive and able to stir.

CHAPTER LVII

1741

Correspondence with Swift—Offer of an Honorary Degree—Journeys and Improvements —Visit to Prior Park

THE second volume of "Mr. Pope's Prose Works," which contained the Correspondence with Swift and also the Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus (printed for the first time complete), was published in London in the early part of this year. Curll cheerfully pirated the Dublin edition of the book, remarking in his Preface :

"It is well known that the Dublin edition of these letters is lawful prize here ; and whatever we print is the same there. The safe hand to whom Dean Swift delivered them conveyed them safely to us, so that all the pretences of sending a young peer to go in search of them, or the attempts of an old woman to suppress them, w[illegible] arrant trifling."

Pope, however, filed a bill against Curll, and obtained an injunction. Swift is said to have disclaimed the publication, and to have been extremely angry at the whole proceeding, but it is probable that by this time he was quite unable to understand the details of this complex affair. On March 22

Pope, who was then with Lord Orrery at his house in Duke Street, Westminster, wrote an affectionate, though mildly reproachful, letter to the dean. After many professions of love and esteem, he concludes :

"I must confess a late incident has given me some pain ; but I am satisfied you were persuaded it would not have given me any, and whatever unpleasant circumstances the printing of our letters might be attended with, there was one that pleased me—that the strict friendship we have borne each other so long is thus made known to all mankind. As far as it was your will, I cannot be angry at what, in all other respects, I am quite uneasy under. Had you asked me before you gave them away, I think I could have proposed some better monument for our friendship, or at least of better materials ; and you must allow me to say, this was not my erecting, but yours. My part of them is far too mean, and how inferior to what you have ever in your works set up to me! and can I see these without shame, when I reflect on the many beautiful, pathetic lines of yours, which carry to posterity the name of a man who, if he had not every good quality which you so kindly ascribe to him, would be so proud of none as the constancy and justice of his esteem for you? Adieu ; while I can write, speak, remember, or think, I am yours."

If Swift was able to answer this letter, it would be interesting to know what he said. But it is to be hoped that the state of his mind prevented him from realising the undeserved reproach that was brought against him by his friend. Only a few months later he was pronounced incapable of manag-

ing his own affairs, and was placed under the care of guardians. The fate that he had most dreaded had fallen upon him. Like an old tree, he had begun to die at the top.

The published letters of this year are few, and of no very special interest. The unpublished correspondence with Allen throws some light on the poet's doings. Thus, in April, Pope wrote a letter to introduce Lord Orrery to the master and mistress of Prior Park.

"His lordship will tell you," he says, "that two of my great cares are over, one agreeable, the other disagreeable, as the cares of this life generally run mingled. My Grotto is finished, and my letters are printed."

A little later we hear that, though the Grotto is finished, there is still wanting to the completion of the garden a "frontispiece of your rude stones to build a sort of ruinous arch at the entry into it on the garden side, and the urns to the lawn. As for the Bath stone, I am in no haste, having determined to let the river-side remain plain, till I cover the whole portico with stone hereafter."

Mrs. Blount, he adds, has been like to lose her mother, "and is very unhappy in being too tender-hearted, when she has never had one proof of kindness from her family in twenty years."[1]

In June Warburton was staying at Twickenham, and Pope writes that they are going together to Oxford, for a reason which he will explain later. From Oxford they were to go to Lord Bathurst's, and he suggests that the Allens might meet them at

[1] From the unpublished MS.

Cirencester, "and we might travel to Cornbury, Rousham, Lord Lichfield's, Duke of Shrewsbury's, all which are worth seeing, and, above all, Stowe."

The Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, Dr. Leigh, had inquired unofficially whether the degree of a Doctor of Divinity would be acceptable to Warburton, who sent an affirmative answer. Pope had also received the offer of the degree of Doctor of Civil Law. The Vice-Chancellor's motion, so far as Warburton was concerned, was outvoted by some of the more orthodox members of the University, or, as Warburton preferred to phrase it, by "the exploits of two or three 'particulars,' the creatures of a man in power, and the slaves of their own passions and prejudices."

Pope, enraged at this intolerance, determined to refuse the honour that had been offered to himself. "I have received some chagrin at the delay (for Dr. King tells me it will prove no more) of your degree at Oxon," he wrote to Warburton on August 12. "As for mine, I will die before I receive one, in an art I am ignorant of, at a place where there remains any scruple of bestowing one on you, in a science of which you are so great a master. In short, I will be doctored with you, or not at all. I am sure, wherever honour is not conferred on the deserving there can be none given to the undeserving; no more from the hands of priests than of princes."

At this time Warburton was trying to persuade Pope to add a fourth book to "The Dunciad." The book was to be made out of the various fragments that the poet had by him, and the

behaviour of the University naturally helped to "hitch in a rhyme." [1]

"If I could prevail on myself to complete 'The Dunciad,'" wrote Pope to his new "guide, philosopher, and friend," "it will be published at the same time with a general edition of all my verses (for poems I will not call them); and I hope your friendship to me will be then as well known as my being an author, and go down together to posterity—I mean to as much posterity as poor moderns can reach to, where the commentator, as usual, will lend a crutch to the weak poet to help him to limp a little further than he could on his own feet. We shall take our own degree together in fame, whatever we do at the University; and I tell you once more I will not have it there without you."

Allen was, as usual, kept regularly informed of the poet's movements. On June 12 Pope was back at Twickenham, and proposing to inhabit his own home for a while, the garden being now in its highest beauty. He has just despatched two pine-apples by coach to Widcombe, and Dr. Oliver has sent him two hogsheads of cider. He hopes to visit Prior Park in September, but he may have to go to Bristol with a friend, "and if our old project of a stay on Clifton Down and a voyage to Wales were practicable, I would aim at it then."

Allen had suggested that Pope should invest some of his spare cash in shares in the Sun Fire Office, and the poet writes that the money now lies ready, and he does not know what to do with it. "To say the truth, I never more needed to make use of it,

[1] About "Apollo's Mayor and Aldermen."

for I am in near £200 arrear to my Printer. That rascal Curll has pirated the Letters, which would have ruined half my edition, but we have got an injunction from my Lord Chancellor to prohibit his selling them for the future, tho' doubtless he'll do it clandestinely. And I have done with expensive editions for ever, which are only a compliment to a few curious people, at the expense of the publisher, and to the displeasure of the many. I was half drawn into this by what Motte had done formerly, and for the time to come, the world shall not pay, nor make me pay, more for my books than they are worth." [1]

His infirmities, he complains, increase every year. ["Tho' my spirit be prompt, my flesh is weak. I have two great tasks on my hands. I am trying to benefit myself and to benefit posterity; not by works of my own, God knows: I can but skirmish and maintain a flying fight with vice. Its forces augment, and will drive me off the stage before I shall see the effects complete, either of Divine Providence or vengeance; for sure we can be quite saved only by the one or punished by the other. The condition of morality is so desperate as to be above all human hands. . . .] Though I'm not in ill-health, I am so weak in body that I go every night to bed weary of the day, even without anything that you would call fatigue. My mind at present is as dejected as possible, for I love my country, and I love mankind, and I see a dismal scene opening for our own and the other nations, which will not long be a secret to you. God

[1] From the unpublished MS.

prosper your particular, tho' in general miseries no honest man can be easy. . . ." [1]

For a brief period Pope stayed quietly at Twickenham, engaged, presumably, in building his ruined arch with a cargo of six tons of rough stone and Bath stone which arrived from Bristol. It was not long, however, before he went off on another round of visits, including a stay with Lord Lyttelton, for whose grounds he planned three buildings. He still hoped to get to Prior Park, but writes : " I am really sore and sick of a journey so many days after it that it deprives me of all the enjoyment and quiet I propose by it, and can only give my friends pain and no pleasure."

On his return he found his pavement new-laid, and observes : " I think all my vanities of this sort are at an end ; and I will excuse them to the connoisseurs by setting over my door, in conclusion of them, *Parvum Parva decent.* I must charge you for encouraging some of them, and others of my friends for encouraging others. But I have had my share, too, of discouragement and censure from enemies ; nevertheless, upon the whole, I neither repent much, nor am very proud, but *tolerably pleased with them.*"

In October Allen was expected to pay a short visit to Twickenham, and Pope had promised to return with him on the 19th and spend several weeks at Prior Park. He had already begun his work upon the new book of " The Dunciad," which he hoped to finish in the country. Yet in a letter to Lord Marchmont, dated October 10, he says :

[1] Unpublished except for the paragraph in brackets.

"I may tell you that I am determined to publish no more in my life-time, for many reasons, but principally through the zeal I have to speak the *whole truth*, and neither to praise or dispraise by halves, or with worldly managements. I think fifty an age at which to write no longer for amusements, but for some use, and with design to do some good. I never had any uneasy desire of fame, or keen resentment of injuries, and now both are asleep together.[1] Other ambitions I never had, than to be tolerably thought of by those I esteemed; and this has been gratified beyond my proudest hopes."

By November 3 Pope was at Bath, whence he wrote an affectionate letter to Lord Lyttelton, praying not to be forgotten. His political interest was evidently waning, as his absorption grew deeper in the new poem, and he confesses that he can do little or nothing to assist his Opposition friends.

"I fear I live in vain," he continues; "that is, must live only to myself. Yet I feel every day what the Puritans call *outgoings* of my soul, in the concern I take for some of you, which, upon my word, is a warmer sensation than any I feel in my own, and for my own being. Why are you a courtier? Why is Murray a lawyer? It may be well for other people, but what is that to your own enjoyment, to mine? I would have you both pass as happy and satisfied a life as I have done; you will both laugh at this, but I would have you know, had I been tempted by nature and Providence with the same talents that you and he have, I would have

[1] How much truth there was in this boast may be seen later, in his resentment against Cibber's letter.

done as you do. But if either of you ever become tired or stupid, God send you my quiet and my resignation."

Lyttelton replied with his usual cordiality. He envied his friend the quiet and happiness he enjoyed with the Allens. But he wished that Lord Bolingbroke were in England, that he might exhort and animate Pope not to bury his talents in a philosophical indolence, but employ them in the cause of virtue. "The corruption and hardship of the present age is no excuse, for your writings will last to ages to come, and do good a thousand years hence if they can't now; but I believe they would be of great present benefit. The moral song may steal into our hearts and teach us to be as good sons, as good friends, as beneficent, as charitable as Mr. Pope, and that would be serving your country, though you can't raise her up such ministers or such senators as you desire."

CHAPTER LVIII

1742

Change of Government—"The New Dunciad" —Cibber's Letter

IN July 1741 a general election had taken place, which went badly for Walpole, who began to realise that he was nearly at the end of his tether. On December 1 the new Parliament met. An attack having been opened by Pulteney on the conduct of the war, Walpole accepted the challenge by fixing January 21 for the consideration of the state of the nation. The numerical proportions of the two parties were nearly equal, and the majority would depend upon the results of the contested election returns. Walpole made a bold bid for favour by offering the Prince of Wales an additional fifty thousand a year, but Frederick refused the favour from his hands, though the Boy Patriots secretly attempted to make terms with the minister. On January 21 Pulteney moved that the papers relating to the war should be referred to a secret committee. Walpole made a brilliant speech in his own defence, and the motion was defeated by three votes. But in a subsequent division on a contested election return the Government was beaten by one vote,

and Walpole saw that the game was up. He was created Earl of Orford on February 9, and resigned office on February 11. Lord Wilmington became Prime Minister, with Lord Carteret as Secretary of State.

So much is necessary to make clear certain allusions in Pope's letters at the beginning of this year. Bethel was still in Italy, and on January 1 the poet wrote him a letter which, for once, contained a little public news.

BATH, *January 1st* [1742].

"Poor Cleland! I shall never forgive Sir Robert.[1] Why is he always singling out my friends to hurt so? In my conscience, if he had known 'em he had made them more his friends than his way of thinking allows him to believe. He has painted some of 'em more formidable than they were, upon the supposition they were not so. Unless (what indeed in Cleland's case might be more probable, as he was so much beneath his fearing him) he be too credulous to Informers. For you and I certainly knew that Cleland had been much softened and temperate in his speeches as to party of late years. So much, that he had been suspected by the other party; and though it was a severe, yet it was an honourable mortification for him to lose his bread, in proof of the contrary. Since he was to die so soon, I am glad he was thus justified; that if he was hurt by scoundrels who wanted his place, or wanted to show their zeal to get some other, he was raised and preserved in the opinion of better men. . . .

[1] Cleland died in September 1741, having been dismissed from his post as Land-tax Commissioner the previous July.

"You'll have heard that the new Parliament has opened with a change of the minority into the majority in three very important and hard-fought points; they have carried their chairman of Committee of Elections against the Court, and invalidated the Westminster election, with a strong additional vote against all appearance whatsoever of any military forces at any election. Some application, it is said, has been made on the ministerial part to the prince, but without effect. Both sides are too busy to allow almost any to keep this Christmas out of town. It will probably be employed much otherwise than in devotion, though not without great donations to the poor of Scotland, and the poor in spirit all over this poor kingdom.[1]

In another letter to Bethel Pope asked for tidings of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who had set forth on her twenty years' exile from her home and family in July 1739, and in 1740-41 was travelling in Italy. "You mention the fame of my old acquaintance, Lady Mary, as spread over Italy," writes the poet. "Neither you delight in telling, nor I in hearing, the particulars which acquire such a reputation; yet I wish you had just told me, if the character be more avaricious or amatory, and which passion had got the better at last."

Pope and Warburton remained at Bath till the middle or end of January, by which time it may be supposed that their work on "The New Dunciad" was finished. An undated letter from the poet and his commentator gives a glimpse of the pair on their wintry journey to town. The first part is written

[1] From the unpublished MS.

from Avebury, which is here spelt as it is pronounced.

"We are got safely to Abery thro' the snow," report the travellers, "and hope to do so to-morrow to Newbury. The appearance looked a little frightful at first, but the strength and vigour we received from tongue and chicken and a huge fire (tho' not equal to a Widcombe fire) has reconciled us to undertake a new expedition over the alps of snow."

On February 8 Pope was in London, partly on account of some business affairs of Hooke's and Warburton's, and partly, perhaps, on account of the excitement that had been aroused by the fall of Walpole. The poet's political friends were, of course, keenly interested in the composition of the new Government, but, as usual, nobody was wholly satisfied with the disposition of affairs, and many were disappointed.

["The face of public affairs is very much changed,"] wrote Pope to Allen on February 8, ["and this fortnight's vacation very busy. It is a most important interval, but I never in my life wrote a letter on these subjects: I content myself, as you do, with honest wishes for honest men to govern us, without asking for any party or any denomination besides. That is all the distinction I know:] and though they call kings the fountains of honour, I think them only the bestowers of titles; which they are generally most profuse of to wh—s and kn—s. . . .

"Mrs. Vernon, my landlady, is dead, and I may (if I please, and if I am rich enough) buy the perpetuity of this house, and the little land about it, with the

cottages adjoining on each side of me; without which, indeed, it would not be worth making a purchase of. But I am neither eager nor rash in such a resolution, and, if no disagreeable person bought it who might be troublesome to me, I would as willingly let it alone." [1]

"The New Dunciad," as the fourth book was called, was published in March, with notes by Pope and Warburton. Once again Pope exemplified in his own person his theory about the ruling passion, and gave yet another proof of his own ruling passion for petty and puerile mysteries. He explains, in the advertisement to the first edition, that "The New Dunciad" was found merely by accident, in taking a survey of the library of a late eminent nobleman; but in so blotted a condition, and in so many detached pieces, as plainly showed it to be not only incorrect, but unfinished. The "library" was, of course, a myth, but it was true that the poem was made up out of detached fragments for a larger work, which was to have concluded with a satire against "the misapplication of learning, science, and art, exemplified by pictures, characters, and examples."

According to the Argument, this book shows the completion of the prophecies mentioned at the end of the third book. The poet begins with a new Invocation, after the fashion of greater bards, when some high and worthy matters are to be set forth. He shows the goddess coming in her majesty to destroy Order and Science, and to substitute the Kingdom of the Dull upon earth. She leads captive the Sciences and silences the Muses.

[1] Unpublished except for the paragraph in brackets.

Beneath her footstool Science groans in chains,
And Wit dreads exile, penalties, and pains.
There foamed rebellious Logic, gagged and bound,
There, stript, fair Rhet'ric languished on the ground;
His blunted arms by Sophistry are borne,
And shameless Billingsgate her robes adorn.
Morality, by her false guardians drawn,
Chicane in furs and Casuistry in lawn,[1]
Gasps, as they straighten at each end the cord,
And dies when Dulness gives her Page the word.[2]

The spirit of Italian Opera passes by, "with mincing step, small voice, and languid eye." She casts a scornful glance on the prostrate Muses, and exalts the false taste of modern harmony. She realises, however, that rebellion would soon begin if music meanly borrowed aid from sense.

Strong in new arms, lo! giant Handel stands,
Like bold Briareus with a hundred hands;
To stir, to rouse, to shake the soul he comes,
And Jove's own thunders follow Mars's drums.
Arrest him, Empress, or you sleep no more!—
She heard, and drove him to the Hibernian shore.[3]

And now the goddess summons all her subjects to her throne—half-wits, tasteless admirers, vain pretenders, bards, blockheads, and false critics. First and foremost rises the spectre of a pedant schoolmaster—probably intended for Busby—who holds forth a dreadful wand, and vaunts his methods of education to the goddess.

[1] Bishops and judges.

[2] An allusion to the hanging judge, Page.

[3] Handel had been ruined by his operatic enterprise, which did not receive the support of the nobility. He went to Ireland i 1741, where he produced *The Messiah*.

Placed at the door of learning, youth to guide,
We never suffer it to stand too wide.
To ask, to guess, to know, as they commence,
As Fancy opens the quick springs of sense,
We ply the memory, we load the brain,
Bind rebel wit, and double chain on chain;
Confine the thought, to exercise the breath;
And keep them in the pale of words till death.

The verbal critics, headed by Bentley, under the title of Aristarchus, come in for another castigation. The learned scholiasts are the goddess's faithful subjects, and Bentley boasts of having "Made Horace dull, and humbled Milton's strain." With Warburton's help, Pope was able to give a witty description of the trifling points over which the wordy war of classical criticism was waged. Passing from words to things, he has a slash at the metaphysicians. Speaking in the character of one of these, Aristarchus declares :

For thee we dim the eyes and stuff the head,
With all such reading as was never read :
For thee explain a thing till all men doubt it;
And write about it, goddess, and about it :
So spins the silk-worm its small, slender store,
And labours till it clouds itself all o'er.

Bentley retires before the advance of a young man of fashion, who has just returned from making the grand tour. He is accompanied by his French tutor and his *chère amie*. The tutor introduces the youth to the goddess as her accomplished son.

Thine from the birth, and sacred from the rod,
A dauntless infant ! never scared with God.

Having passed safe and unseen through school

and college, the young Æneas burst glorious on the town :

> Intrepid then, o'er seas and lands he flew :
> Europe he saw, and Europe saw him too.
> There all thy gifts and graces we display,
> Thou, only thou, directing all our way !
> To where the Seine, obsequious as she runs,
> Pours at great Bourbon's feet her silken sons ;
> Or Tiber, now no longer Roman, rolls,
> Vain of Italian arts, Italian souls :
> To happy convents, bosomed deep in vines,
> Where slumber abbots, purple as their wines ;
> To isles of fragrance, lily-silvered vales,
> Diffusing languor in the panting gales ;
> To lands of singing or of dancing slaves,
> Love-whispering woods and lute-resounding waves.
> But chief her shrine where naked Venus keeps,
> And Cupids ride the Lion of the Deeps ;
> Where, eased of fleets, the Adriatic main
> Wafts the smooth eunuch and enamoured swain.
> Led by my hand, he sauntered Europe round,
> And gathered every vice on Christian ground.
> Tried all *hors d'œuvres*, all *liqueurs* defined,
> Judicious drank, and greatly daring dined ;
> Dropt the dull lumber of the Latin store,
> Spoiled his own language, and acquired no more.

The youth and his companions are made welcome by the goddess, who is next approached by a couple of antiquarians, Annius[1] and Mummius,[2] who quarrel about their collections, and by a band of naturalists who bring appropriate gifts :

> A nest, a toad, a fungus, or a flower.

A florist describes the culture of a wonderful flower in a passage which throws a lurid light

[1] Annius is supposed to be meant for Sir Andrew Fountaine.

[2] Mummius was probably Pope's old butt, Dr. Woodward.

upon the methods of "fancy gardening" under George II.

> Fair from its humble bed I reared this flower,
> Suckled, and cheered, with air and sun and shower,
> Soft on the paper ruff its leaves I spread,
> Bright with the gilded button tipt its head;
> Then throned in glass, and named it Caroline:
> Each maid cried, Charming! and each youth, Divine!

Pope's curious indifference to the details of nature is shown by his omission to tell us what the flower was, though he suggests that it was either a rose or a carnation. Again, in the description of a butterfly hunt by a second naturalist, the insect is variously alluded to as "a beautiful bird," a specimen of "the enamelled race," and a "child of heat and air!"

The goddess commends the zeal of both naturalists, and complacently remarks that—

> By some object ev'ry brain is stirred;
> The dull may waken to a humming-bird;
> The most recluse, discreetly opened, find
> Congenial matter in the cockle-kind;
> The mind, in metaphysics at a loss,
> May wander in a wilderness of moss;
> The head that turns at super-lunar things,
> Poised with a tail, may steer on Wilkins' wings.[1]

She cautions her subjects, however, not to proceed beyond trifles to any useful or extensive views of nature or the Author of nature. She is secured

[1] John Wilkins, afterwards Bishop of Chester, published in 1638 a work called "The Discovery of a New World; or, a Discourse tending to prove that 'tis possible there may be another habitable World in the Moon; with a Discourse concerning the possibility of a passage thither." Pope describes him as one of the first projectors of the Royal Society, who had set some volatile geniuses to work upon making wings to fly to the moon.

against all apprehension on this score by an address from a body of freethinkers and "minute philosophers," with Tindal and "Silenus"[1] at their head. The youth of the nation, instructed and principled by these, are presented to the goddess as the completest product of modern education.

> From priestcraft happily set free,
> Lo! every finished son returns to thee:
> First slave to words, then vassal to a name,
> Then dupe to party; child and man the same;
> Bounded by nature, narrowed still by art,
> A trifling head and a contracted heart.
> Thus bred, thus taught, how many have I seen,
> Smiling on all, and smiled on by a queen.[2]

The youths are admitted to drink the cup of Magus, the high-priest of the goddess, which causes oblivion of all obligations, divine, civil, moral, or rational. Dulness confers on these, her adepts, various orders and degrees, and dismisses them with a blessing which concludes with a yawn of extraordinary virtue, the progress and effects whereof complete the poem.

> In vain, in vain—the all-composing hour
> Resistless falls: the Muse obeys the Power.
> She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold
> Of Night primæval, and of Chaos old!
> Before her Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
> And all its varying rainbows die away.

[1] Silenus is meant for Thomas Gordon (died 1750), who helped to edit *The Independent Whig*, and wrote letters attacking the established religion. He was employed by Walpole, who made him Commissioner of the Wine Licences. He is best remembered as the translator of Sallust and Tacitus.

[2] Pope pretended to allude to the queen or goddess of Dulness. But he certainly meant to have a hit at the memory of Caroline.

Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
The sickening stars fade off th' ethereal plain;
As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand opprest,
Closed, one by one, to everlasting rest;
Thus at her felt approach and secret might,
Art after art goes out, and all is night.
See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of Casuistry heaped o'er her head!
Philosophy, that leaned on Heaven before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,
And Metaphysic calls for aid on Sense;
See Mystery to Mathematics fly!
In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion, blustering, veils her sacred fires,
And, unawares, Morality expires.
Nor public flame, nor private, dares to shine;
Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!
Lo! thy dread Empire, Chaos! is restored;
Light dies before thy uncreating word;
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall,
And universal darkness buries all.[1]

"The New Dunciad" was greatly admired by the poet's contemporaries. Gray remarks in a letter to his friend West:

"The genii of operas and schools, with their attendants, the pleas of the virtuosi and the florists, and the yawn of Dulness at the end, are as fine as anything he has written. The metaphysicians' part is to me the worst; and here and there are a few ill-expressed lines, and some hardly intelligible." Bolingbroke heard that the poem was "obscure," and refrained from reading it for some time on that

[1] It is said that Pope could never recite this splendid passage without emotion.

account. But when at length he took the trouble to examine the work for himself he declared that it was the best and most finished of all Pope's productions.

Among the few discontented readers was Colley Cibber, and he had good reason for finding the poem offensive.[1] In the first place there was the line—

> Soft on her lap her Laureate son reclines,

while the accomplished youth who had returned from the grand tour, is described as having—

> As much estate, and principle, and wit
> As Jansen, Fleetwood, Cibber shall think fit.[2]

Worse still, the satirist recounted how the goddess sent to every child—

> Firm impudence, or stupefaction mild,
> And straight succeeded, leaving shame no room,
> Cibberian forehead, or Cimmerian gloom.

[1] In his Apology for his Life, published in 1740, Cibber had presumed to say: "When I find my name in the satirical works of this poet [Pope], I never look upon it as any malice meant to me, but *profit* to himself. For he considers that my face is more known than most in the nation, therefore a lick at the Laureate will be a sure bait *ad captandum vulgus*, to catch 'little readers.'"

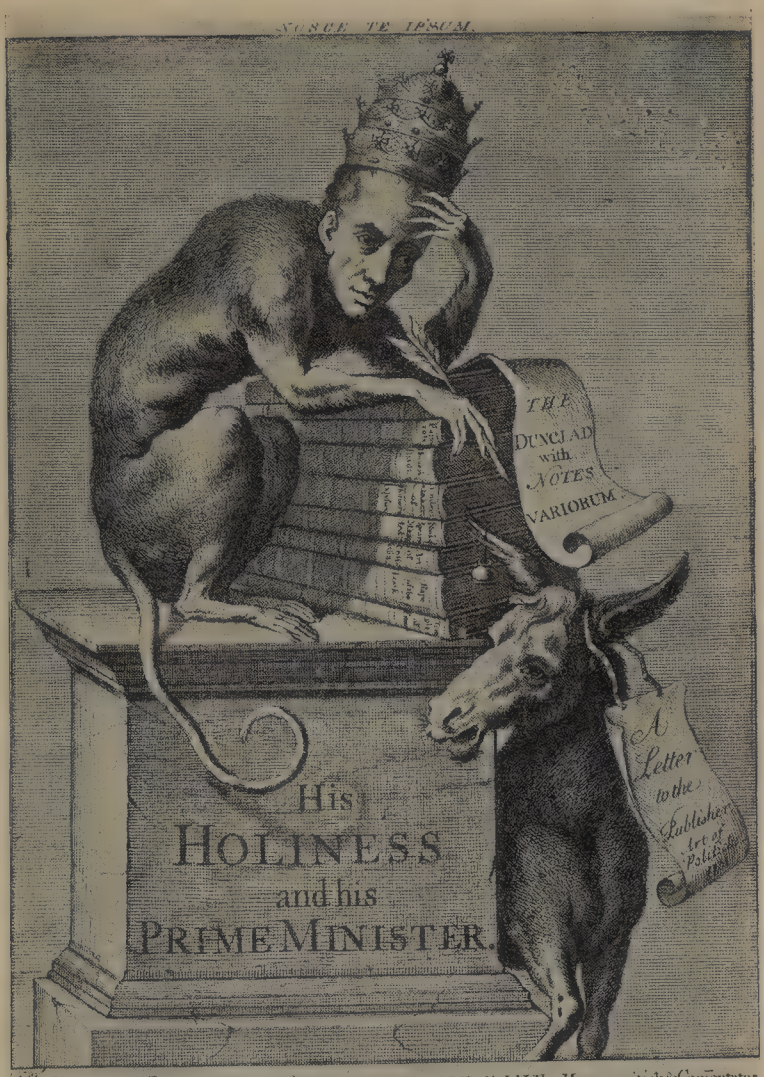
[2] In a note Pope says: "Three very eminent persons, and all managers of plays; who, though not governors by profession, had, each in his way, concerned himself with the education of youth, and regulated their wit, their morals, or their finances, at that period of their age which is the most important, their entrance into the polite world."

Fleetwood was the manager of the Haymarket (1734–1745). He lost his fortune at the gaming-table, and from a pigeon was transformed into a rook. Jansen was a card-sharping son of Sir Theodore Jansen, a South Sea Director, who was expelled from the House of Commons in 1721. The Duke of Bedford lost £5,000 to the son at White's.

In a footnote it was explained that the Cibberian forehead was to fit her devotees for self-interest and self-conceit, while the Cimmerian gloom qualified them for the pleasures of the opera and the table. Cibber was not thin-skinned, but he was tired of these repeated insults, and, being devoid of all scruple, he retorted after a fashion that must have given his opponent the maximum of annoyance, at the expenditure of a very moderate amount of wit. In July he published a shilling pamphlet entitled, "A Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope, inquiring into the motives that might induce him in his Satyrical Works, to be so frequently fond of Mr. Cibber's Name."

Cibber begins by explaining that he had been stoically silent for a long time under Mr. Pope's satirical favours, but that at last his friends have spirited him up to the contest. As for his work, that must speak for itself.

"I wrote," he says, "more to be fed than to be famous, and since my writings still give me a dinner, do you rhyme me out of my stomach if you can. And I own myself so contented a Dunce, that I would not have even your merited fame in poetry, if it were to be attended with half the fretful solicitude you seem to have lain under to maintain it. . . . It is almost amazing that you, who have writ with such masterly spirit upon the ruling passion, should be so blind a slave to your own, as not to have seen how far a low avarice of praise might prejudice or debase that valuable character which your works, without your own commendatory and notes upon them, might have maintained."



The PHIZ and CHARACTER *of an* ALEXANDRIAN Hyper-critick & Comentator.

Nature her self shrunk back when that were born;
And cry'd the Work's not mine ——
She Midwife stood aghast and when she saw
Thy Mountain back, and thy distorted legs.
Thy face half painted with the stamp of Man.

And half co-eval with Beast stood doubting long
Whose right in Thee were meet:
—thou art all an Ape; Soul and Body;
The first grasp'd Reason, from unskill'd Power.
Rude in the making. Art an Ape of Jove.

Awd by no Shame, by no Respect controul'd.
In Scandal busy in Reproaches bold.

Spleen to Mankind his envious Heart possess'd
And much he hated All, but most the Best.

ALEXANDER POPE, FROM A SATIRICAL PRINT.

In the Preface to "The Dunciad" Pope declared that he had attacked no man living in the Poem who had not before published some scandal against himself. In a note, however, he had excepted two or three persons, whose dulness or scurrility had justly entitled them to a place in "The Dunciad." Cibber observes that there was no reason for the inclusion of himself among the dunces, since he had always been one of the warmest admirers of Pope's works, and he had never uttered an ill word against him. He might indeed be dull—that was a misfortune rather than a crime—but he had never been guilty of scurrility. At the same time, he admits that he had once unintentionally offended the poet by putting a bit of harmless gag about *Three Hours after Marriage* into the mouth of Bays, the hero of *The Rehearsal*. He recounts at some length the story of the quarrel that ensued. Having dealt with some of the unflattering allusions to himself scattered throughout Pope's writings, he dwells particularly on the line—

> And has not Colley too his lord and whore?

As to the charge about the lord, he points out that "we have both had him, and sometimes the *same* lord; but as there is neither vice nor folly in keeping our betters' company, the wit or satyr of the verse (!) can only point at my lord for keeping such *ordinary* company." Turning to the second accusation, he relates a graceless anecdote of an escapade of Pope's youthful days, when he was the boon companion of certain wild young lords. Nothing, probably, would have given more annoyance

to the self-appointed moralist than such a tale, which would delight his enemies and amuse his friends. So intense was Pope's fury that he was willing to sacrifice one of his finest works in order to revenge himself upon the author of this ribald attack.[1]

At first, however, the poet pretended to be amused at the onslaught of so insignificant an assailant. On July 23 he wrote to a friend :

" Cibber is printing a letter to me of the expostulatory kind in prose. God knows when I shall read it when it is published, and perhaps I may send to ask your account of it. Your opinion whether or not to answer it, I need not ask. He swears he will have the last word with me, upon which I have seen an epigram :

> You will have the last word, after all that is past,
> And 'tis certain, dear Cibber, that you may speak last ;
> But your reas'ning, God help you, is none of the strongest,
> For know the last word is the word that lasts longest."

[1] " Cibber triumphed over Pope by that singular felicity of character, that inimitable *gaieté de cœur*, that honest simplicity of truth, from which flowed so warm an admiration of the genius of his adversary ; and that exquisite tact in the characters of men, which carried down this child of airy humour to the verge of his ninetieth year, with all the enjoyments of strong animal spirits, and all that innocent egotism which became frequently a source of his own raillery " (Isaac Disraeli).

CHAPTER LIX

1742

Relations with the Duchess of Marlborough—The End of Savage—Proposal for the New Edition of "The Dunciad"—Visit to the Allens

POPE had intended to take his annual flight to Bath at the end of August, but his departure was postponed for a reason which, as he told Allen, Mr. Hooke could furnish. This reason was to be found in the exigent demands of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, who had laid violent hands upon the poet. Pope's friend, Hooke, had been recommended by Lord Chesterfield to the duchess when she was about to write her "Account" of her conduct which was published this year.[1] The duchess is said to have offered Pope a considerable sum to write a laudatory Character of the late duke, but he probably thought that he had done enough in suppressing the satirical Character written for the "Essay on Man."[2] It is clear, from Pope's

[1] "Account of the Conduct of the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, from her first coming to Court to 1710."

[2] The lines beginning—

> In hearts of kings or arms of queens who lay,
> (How happy !) those to ruin, these betray.

This Character formed a cancelled page of the "Essay on Man" in the quarto edition of Pope's works (1735).

correspondence, that he accepted one or more of the favours that she tried to shower upon him at this time.[1]

The duchess was Ranger of Windsor Park, and she desired that Pope should spend a part of the summer with her and Mr. Hooke at Windsor Lodge. On July 19 he excuses himself to Allen for postponing his promised visit, explaining: "I can't deny what is so much at the heart of the old lady, who has made my friend's fortune; and she goes not into the country till the 9th or 10th at soonest of August."

On August 10 he writes again:

"I am going to the lady, Mr. Hooke with me, for the first time in the country, but not to stay above three or four days, and I hope to make no other than such short excursions; nor to *lend* myself, much less *sell* myself on any consideration, to any dependency half so strong as the tie of our friendship obliges me in to you and a very few others."[2]

The next letter to Allen, which is undated, was written from the Ranger's Lodge:

"I am now engaged in Windsor Forest unavoidably for some time to come. . . . Savage plagues me with his misunderstandings and miseries together

[1] In a letter to Marchmont (March 3, 1742) the duchess says: "If you talk to Mr. Pope of me, endeavour to keep him my friend, for I do firmly believe the immortality of the soul as much as he does, though I am not learned enough to have found out what it is."

[2] Evidently Allen had heard something of the duchess's generous intentions towards Pope, and had warned him against accepting any substantial favours at her hands.

(or I should not take so much regard to the former) and I must send him an answer. You see it enclosed, and I beg you to add and put into it an order for five guineas to be paid him by the post-master at Bristol. I must further desire you to inquire whether he be in any particular misfortune or in prison ? for such a report I have heard, though he says not a word like it, only requires me to send him a remittance to enable him to pay his journey to London, declaring his absolute resolution to stay no longer in the country. I can really assist him no further, nor will it be in that case to any purpose. . . ."[1]

Not till September 23 was Pope back at Twickenham, and preparing for his journey to Widcombe, where Warburton was to be his fellow-guest.

"I have been so detained," he writes, "where I could not, without an imputation of ingratitude, refuse to pass some time, that it was past my power to avail myself of Lord Chesterfield's offer of carrying me half-way to you. The lady flamed upon it, and would hear of no such thing : her coach should carry me any whither, but I must be left with her by that lord. So I am, and not well into the bargain, nor have been fit to be from home, tho' indeed it is impossible to be better attended or kinder treated."[2]

The allusion to Savage proves that Pope's long patience with his *protégé* was nearly at an end. The exile had spent about a year at Swansea, where he had finished his tragedy. He then desired to come

[1] From the unpublished MS. [2] *Ibid.*

to town, to bring it upon the stage. This project was opposed by his friends, and his chief benefactor (Pope) advised him to put it into the hands of Mr. Thomson and Mr. Mallet that it might be prepared for the stage, and to allow his friends to receive the profits, and pay him an annual pension out of them. This proposal Savage rejected with scorn, declaring that he was determined to be kept no longer in leading-strings, and that he had no elevated idea of the "bounty" which proposed to pension him out of the profits of his own labours. With the intent to return to London, he went to Bristol, where he was kindly received by his former associates, who made a collection for him of about thirty pounds. Instead of proceeding at once to town, he lingered on, in the hope of obtaining more, till the money already raised slipped through his fingers, and he found himself obliged to remain in Bristol till fresh funds could be obtained.

Meanwhile he had been wearying his benefactors with complaints and reproaches. On September 15, 1742, Pope wrote him a stern letter, in which he says, "I once more tell you that neither I nor any one who contributed at first to assist you in your retirements, ever desired you should stay out of London for any other reason than that your debts prevented your staying in it." It was Savage himself, Pope points out, who chose Swansea for his place of retirement. When he objected to it, Pope had agreed to send remittances to any other country place that might be chosen. He now sent an extra contribution with the view of enabling Savage to

travel to London. The little that he could contribute would be at the unfortunate man's service in town, but he could not persuade others to continue their subscriptions.

"What mortal," he concludes, "would take your play, or your business with Lord T[yrconnel] out of your hands, if you could come and attend to it yourself? It was only in defect of that, these offices of the two gentlemen [1] you are so angry at, were offered. What interest but trouble could they have had in it? And what was done more in relation to the lord, but trying a method we thought more likely to serve you, than threats and injurious language? . . . Indeed, I was shocked at your strong declarations of *vengeance* and *violent measures* against him, and am very glad you now protest you meant nothing like what those words imported."

The money sent by Pope was probably the remittance of five pounds mentioned by Johnson. With this Savage bought a new coat, and intended to journey to London, but was tempted to spend the balance at his favourite tavern. On January 10, 1743, he was arrested for a debt of eight pounds, and taken to a sponging-house, whence, being unable to obtain bail, he was removed to Newgate. Fortunately, he found a very humane gaoler, who gave him a room to himself, and supported him at his own table. He had now ceased from corresponding with any of his subscribers except Pope, who continued to remit him the promised twenty pounds a year, and by whom it was expected that he would be set free,

[1] Mallet and Thomson.

because the gaoler had been directed to inquire into the state of his debts.

When he had been about six months in prison he received, relates Johnson, a letter from Pope, which contained a charge of very atrocious ingratitude. It appears that Orator Henley, in one of his advertisements, had mentioned "Pope's treatment of Savage," and this was supposed to be in consequence of a complaint from the exile. There is a letter from Pope to Savage, attributed to the year 1743, which shows great resentment, but as there is no mention of Henley, it is probably not the one to which Johnson alludes.

"I must be sincere with you," it runs, "as our correspondence is now likely to be closed. Your language is really too high, and what I am not used to from my superiors; much too extraordinary for me, at least sufficiently so to make me obey your commands, and never more presume to advise or meddle in your affairs, but leave your own conduct entirely to your own judgment. It is with concern I find so much misconstruction joined with so much resentment in your nature. You still injure some whom you had known many years as friends, and for whose intentions I would take upon me to answer; but I have no weight with you, and cannot tell how soon (if you have not already) you may misconstrue all I can say or do; and as I see in that case how unforgiving you are, I desire to prevent this in time. You cannot think yet, I have injured you or been your enemy; and I am determined to keep out of your suspicion by not being officious any longer, or obtruding into any of your concerns

further than to wish you heartily success in them all, and will never pretend to serve you but when both you and I shall agree that I should."

A few days after the receipt of the severe letter from Pope, Savage was seized with a pain in the back and side, and on July 25, 1743, he confined himself to his room. "The last time the keeper saw him," to quote Johnson's narrative, "was on July 31, 1743; when Savage, seeing him at his bedside, said with an uncommon earnestness, 'I have something to say to you, sir; but after a pause moved his hand in a melancholy manner; and finding himself unable to recollect what he was going to communicate, said, 'Tis gone!' The keeper soon after left him, and the next morning he died. He was buried in the churchyard of St. Peter, at the expense of the keeper." [1]

To return to the autumn of 1742. Pope had now conceived the unfortunate project of deposing Theobald from his position as hero of "The Dunciad," and exalting Cibber in his stead. This could not be accomplished without remodelling the poem, and, even with the most careful manipulation, it was impossible to avoid awkwardness and inconsistency. The new edition, to be published in quarto, was to consist of the four books complete, with an even more formidable array of notes and prolegomena than before. On November 27 Pope wrote to Warburton from Prior Park:

"A project has arisen in my head to make you, in some measure, the editor of this new edition of 'The Dunciad,' if you have no scruple of owning

[1] The name of the gaoler, Mr. Dagg, deserves to be recorded.

some of the graver notes, which are now added to those of Mr. Cleland and Dr. Arbuthnot. I mean it as a kind of prelude or advertisement to the public of your Commentaries on the 'Essay on Man,' and on 'Criticism,' which I propose to print next. . . . I have a particular reason to make you interest yourself in me and my writings. It will cause both them and me to make the better figure to posterity. A very mediocre poet, one Drayton, is yet taken some notice of, because Selden wrote a very few notes on one of his poems."[1]

Pope stayed at Prior Park till some time in December. In an undated letter to Allen, written just after his return to Twickenham, he says that he half repents having left his friends, though he is glad to have no more winter journeys.

"I already meet with news enough from London," he adds, "to wish I could stay here, and see it as seldom as you do Bath. Indeed, my heart is sick of this bad world (as Cato said), and I see it daily growing worse. If there were to be another deluge, I protest I don't know more than one Noah and his wife (for he happens to have no children) whom I could expect God to save. I hope he will live forty years, however, to preach in, before it comes. And, considering what posterity generally proves, it is no great matter whether he begets sons and daughters or not. . . .

"With all the observation I could possibly make, I

[1] Marchmont told Pope that he must be one of the vainest men living, because it was obvious, "from your close connection with your new commentator, you want to show positively what an exquisite poet you are, and what a quantity of dulness you can carry down on your back without sinking under the load."

could not perceive you had any anxiety about you except a sort of apprehension that the chimney of the pine-house might smoke, so as to be offensive to your new building. John assures me it will not; there need be no fires all the day, and the quantity, when once the house is tight and the glaziers' work good, so small that it evaporates within a few yards of the place. I would fain have it succeed, for two particular reasons: one, because I saw it was Mrs. Allen's desire to have that fruit; and the other because it is the only piece of service I have been able to do you."[1]

For December 8 there is a letter which shows that Pope had some thoughts at this time of leaving Twickenham, and spending the greater part of the year with or near the Allens. But his plans depended on those of Martha Blount. In the early part of his letter he observes that he has heard from Mr. Hooke, who is still with the duchess at Windsor, and begins to feel the effects of a Court life, and the dependence upon the great, who never do good but with a view to making slaves.

"Your views of London this winter are well grounded, and I shall infallibly wish to return to tranquillity in your neighbourhood, or rather in your house, if Mrs. Blount come at last to her senses to fix in your neighbourhood. I won't dispute *that place* with her, or else nobody should have it but myself. I just talked to her of it and the situation, and Mrs. Allen's resolution, as well as your own, that it should be the lot of nobody but one whom she and you could wish

[1] From the unpublished MS.

for a neighbour. She seemed to long for such a place, and agreed that it would fit her in all its circumstances, nobody feeling more than herself the true contentment such a situation would afford her way of thinking. If God but grant her resolution, when she has once made the step of going down with you (if that can be obtained of her foolish weakness for her family) I am convinced the thing is done; and she will become as sure and constant a friend and tenant for years to come as you could have. I found her (more than I could have imagined, satisfied of the conveniency and expediency of such a step), and I really hope it will be effectual. . . .

"I rejoice that the smoke of the Pine-house is blown over: at least, you flatter me in saying so. I should be sorry to blacken you, any way; there are others of my acquaintance who will be black, whether I will or no: and you will be white in spite of all the accidental smokes in the world. Once more I tell you I am sick of this world and the great ones of it, though they have been my intimate acquaintance." [1]

Pope spent this month in rooms in town, only going down to Twickenham for the Christmas holidays, where he was joined by Mr. Murray, Lord Marchmont, Lord Cornbury, and some other neighbours.

"These men of the world," he tells Allen, "envy me the quiet which they would not give themselves. I am offered to purchase the perpetuity of this house and garden, and the cottages near it, the first at twenty, the rest at thirteen years' purchase of the present rent. I am more indifferent about it than

[1] From the unpublished MS.

before I saw Hampton, or knew Widcombe, finding there are two places, besides this, I could live and die in. Yet I am willing to finish all my works here, and wish for the rustic stone for the two little buildings, all the other materials being ready. I think that will be the last sacrifice I shall make to the nymph of the Thames."

His coming to town, he continues, has put a stop to the piraters of his book,[1] who have surrendered all their copies to save themselves from further prosecution. But they had already sold five or six hundred, for which they refunded nothing. The true edition was now completed, and the poet begs Allen to tell Warburton how much it was improved by his notes and discourse. He is trying to serve that gentleman with a certain great man, but he puts little trust in great men, though this particular specimen had much of that which generally animated men of quality to good works—namely, vanity—and he was also not without learning. There is a little intimate touch at the conclusion of this letter. The poet thanks Allen for a present of birds, which had made him dine at home at two o'clock, "a practice I've continued ever since, and invite now and then a friend to a private lodging. Mrs. Blount and Mr. and Mrs. Arbuthnot are to see to my housekeeping there one day next month, and I sometimes dine with them, and carry my venison.[2] I've not been at a great table thrice since I came from you."[3]

[1] This may refer to the Correspondence, or to "The New Dunciad."

[2] He was kept supplied with venison by the Duchess of Marlborough.

[3] From the unpublished MS.

CHAPTER LX

1743

Influenza—Death of Mrs. Blount—Visit to the Allens with Martha Blount—Disastrous Results—Partial Reconciliation

THE Duchess of Marlborough, still with the deadly fear of "Characters" before her eyes, continued to lavish favours upon the poet, who responded in his favourite vein of gallant badinage. In one letter he says that he probably owes her more than she remembers. "First I owe you my house and gardens at Twit'nam, for you would have purchased them for me when you thought me fond of them. Secondly, I owe you a coach and horses, notwithstanding I fought you down to an arm-chair, and the other day I but named a house in town, and I saw with what attention you listened to it, and what you meant by that attention."

However, the project for the town house had fallen through, and the poet asked for nothing more than a couple of bucks for Allen, and a new order for Janette Mowat, presumably one of his pensioners.

In a letter for January 18, 1743, Pope reproaches the duchess for being unwilling to come

nearer him, or to suffer him to come to her. "To use me thus," he exclaims, "to have won me with some difficulty, to have bowed down all my pride, and reduced me to take that at your hands which I never took at any other, and as soon as you had done this to slight your conquest and cast me away with the common lumber of your friends in town—what a girl you are!"

In the spring of this year there was a severe epidemic of influenza, and Pope was laid up with a sharp attack, from the effects of which he never quite recovered. In March he wrote to Allen that he had suffered from all the forms of the prevailing distemper, but, by the help of Dr. Broxolm, he was cured. He found, even at home, the want of such a nurse as Mrs. Allen. "I assure you all one's great friends and great philosophers put together are not half so great a comfort as one good woman in these circumstances; and so tell Dr. Cheyne and Dr. Hartley too, if you please, for I think neither of 'em will be angry at this; though many doctors would, who have the vanity to think themselves better, as well as wiser, than women."

However, with or without a nurse, he was so far recovered that he was going to London to comfort Miss Blount, whose mother he believed was dying. "What she will resolve, or not resolve upon in that case, God knows! I am sure she would not engage her life or fortune with her sister, and yet I apprehend she will scarce out of compassion leave her just upon it.

"I received your two chairs, and think them very easy. I have since from Mrs. Allen the

oysters, and such oysters (for, ill as I was, I could not help tasting them), as neither the oysters of Tenby, nor of all Wales put together, no, nor the oysters so admired by the Romans from our shores, nor—in short, nothing that bore the name of oysters ever could equal.

"A praise as high as this has been given your rusticks by the greatest judge, Mr. Kent, who prefers them to all he ever saw artificial in the world. . . ."[1]

For April 12 there is another long letter to Prior Park, which deals in some detail with the affairs of Martha Blount, who had now lost her mother. There is an interesting allusion, moreover, to Pope's old enemy, Fielding, who had published his first novel, "Joseph Andrews," the previous year. Fielding was a *protégé* of Allen's, and Pope seems to have undertaken to convey some pecuniary assistance to the novelist.[2] The good fairy of Prior Park

[1] From the unpublished MS. In another manuscript letter of this period Pope says: "As to the rusticks which, tho' they would finish all my front with perfect beauty, I am half unwilling to trouble you further, for the same quantity of six ton weight as I last had, will accomplish all; provided they cut off the thick and useless part of the stones, it's no matter of what sizes (for we can piece them as well, if not very small), but John says those stones are best that come from the side of the hill, not from the top."

[2] Pope's heart was probably softened towards Fielding by the knowledge that the novelist was in difficulties. Also, he usually adopted his friends' friends as his own, and Fielding was intimate with Young as well as Allen. The bad understanding between the two had lasted, however, till within a very few years of the period now reached. Pope was said to have attended the first performance of Fielding's skit, *Pasquin*, produced in 1736, which helped to bring down the Playhouse Bill on the heads of the managers and dramatists. There is a caricature, attributed to Hogarth, which shows Pope leaving his box during the per-

had also some scheme in hand for improving Warburton's position.

"Your resolution," writes Pope, "of increasing Mr. Warburton's happiness by securing him in independency is as high a joy to me (to say all in one word) as it is to yourself, and will be to him; who, I see by a letter I've just received, is making himself happy with one kindness you have done him, while you are preparing another he knows not of.

"Fielding has sent the books you subscribed for by the hand I employed in conveying the £20 to him. In one chapter of the second vol. he has paid you a pretty compliment upon your house. . . .[1] You will see Miss Blount much sooner than you or I imagined; if her ill health, both of body and mind (which God forbid) do not prevent, very speedily. For it has pleased Him to take away her mother last week, and the melancholy which both

formance with the remark, "There is no whitewashing this." Fielding had alluded to Pope's intolerance in a mock criticism on his own Covent Garden tragedy. "I have long been sensible," he says, "that the days of poetry are no more, and that there is but one of the moderns (*who shall be nameless*) that can write either sense or English or grammar."

[1] Presumably in the account of Mr. Wilson (who turns out to be Joseph's father) and his garden (Book III.). We are told that no parterres, no fountains, no statues embellished this little garden. Its only ornament was a short walk, shaded by a filbert hedge, with a shady alcove. Mr. Wilson, who was his own gardener, passed six hours out of the twenty-four in his garden.

In "Tom Jones" Fielding describes Squire Allworthy, who was copied from Allen, as "a human being replete with benevolence, meditating in what manner he might render himself most acceptable to his Creator by doing most good to His creatures." Allen sent Fielding £200 before he knew him, and helped to provide for his family.

that, and some circumstances with regard to her sister, affect her with, make her instant removal from the scene and the danger of the highest importance to her. All her friends press her to take the opportunity which her friend, Lady Gerard, offers her, who was this week going to Bath by advice of physicians, and would fain have her with her. An unaccountable tenderness she has for her sister, who is practising upon her every way, and a dejection of spirits, have thrown her into so weak a condition that I dread the consequence if she be left but a few days longer there, and this weakness is made an argument against her journey : she is in terrors at everything. The lady, I find, has not secured a lodging for her in the same house at Bath, so possibly she may be distressed, and she will be obliged to leave her own maid to help her sister for a week or ten days in removing her goods, etc. Therefore, against all events, I know you'll receive her at first (till you can get her well accommodated) at your own house in case she comes ; I beg you also to engage Dr. Hartley's particular care of her at her first coming, for I am alarmed at the apprehension of the distemper, which is more and more fatal, and fear she may suffer on the road by cold, etc. But everything is to be ventured rather than leave her here. And this is the first step toward a happier life than ever fortune has given her an opportunity hitherto to make. It will be very reasonable she should pass some time with Lady Gerard, who deserves well of her and is a very honest woman, and it will be of use to herself to drink the waters some weeks ; after which she

may make her visit to you and Mrs. Allen; and Mr. Warburton and I will come when you will, and Mr. and Mrs. Arbuthnot follow after. So Hampton will be inhabited by me, if not by her, and some other way or other you'll have enough of me. All my present care is for this poor, foolishly-tender, but very honest woman, who, I hope in God, may be prevailed on to set out on Thursday, and get through the journey safe; for indeed *many dangers compass her round* at this time. I know no hands, or hearts, to whom I could commit one I value so much with any confidence so absolute, as I can to yours and Mrs. Allen's. I would go with her myself, if she would let me, and the solicitude I shall be under till you inform me of her safety you may guess, who know what it is to feel and fear for a friend. Adieu. I will tell her, as soon as she comes, to send to your brother's." [1]

Pope's interest in politics had now almost died away. He makes a passing allusion to the death of the Premier, Lord Wilmington (July 3), in a letter to Lord Marchmont:

"Three hundred thousand pounds the sum total of his life, "without one worthy deed, public or private! . . . His title only must be his epitaph; and there can be nothing on his monument remarkable except his nose, which I hope the statuary will do justice to. I should doubly congratulate our victory over the French if the war should occasion you and me the recovery of our friend to England for ever.[2] Pray how will that

[1] From the unpublished MS.

[2] Bolingbroke. The victory was that of Dettingen.

matter stand in your regard? I should be glad either that your lordship was but half master of Battersea, or I of Twickenham." [1]

From a letter to George Arbuthnot, written on July 23, we learn that Pope and the Arbuthnots had contemplated sharing a house belonging to Allen at Bathampton, near Widcombe. It appears, however, that Allen would not allow them to stay anywhere but at Prior Park. In vain Pope had assured the good man that they would be much easier in the smaller house, and stay twice as long. He suspected that Allen was afraid of lending the house, lest other less desirable neighbours should attempt to borrow it.

Pope and Martha Blount had intended to make a stay of some weeks at Prior Park, but the visit proved a fiasco, and nearly broke off the friendship between Pope and the Allens. On August 12 the poet wrote to Lord Orrery from Bristol that he had been summoned from Mr. Allen's to Lord Bathurst's, where he passed five days, and then returned to Widcombe. Mr. Arbuthnot, who had lately arrived from London, had since insisted on carrying him off to Bristol. On August 18 he proposed to return to town, and should not see Prior Park again that year.

The cause of Pope's sudden flight was a quarrel between Martha Blount and Mrs. Allen, which, presumably, made the house too hot to hold him, though we can hardly admire his chivalry in running away.[2] Two letters, published from the Maple-

[1] Pope means that Bolingbroke would stay either with him at Twickenham or with Lord Marchmont at Battersea.

[2] He seems to have thought that Martha would leave the same day as himself, but it would have been more considerate to see that arrangements were made for her departure. Various reasons

durham manuscripts, throw light upon the situation. The first (undated) is from Martha Blount to Pope:

"I hope you are well. I am not. My spirits are quite down, though they should not, for these people deserve so much to be despised. One should do nothing but laugh. I packed up my things yesterday; the servants knew it. Mr. and Mrs. Allen said never a word, nor so much as asked me how I went, where, or when. In short, from every one of them much greater inhumanity than I could conceive anybody could show. Mr. Warburton took no notice of me—'tis most wonderful. They have not one of them named your name, nor drunk your health, since you went. They talk to one another without putting me at all into the conversation. Lord Archibald [Hamilton] is come to Lincoln [Lincombe]. I was to have gone this morning in his coach, but unluckily he keeps it here. I shall go and contrive something with them to-day, for I do really think these people would shove me out, if I did not go soon. . . . My present state is deplorable—I'll get out of it as soon as I can. Adieu. . . ."

The agitation of Pope's reply proves how little fitted he was to face a "scene," how helpless he felt between two angry women.

have been alleged for the quarrel. Martha is said to have been arrogant and overbearing in her behaviour to the Allens, but it is possible that Mrs. Allen was prejudiced against her by the reports about her relations with Pope. One account of the squabble says that Martha asked for the Prior Park chariot to take her to Mass in Bath. As Allen was Mayor of Bath this year, the request might have been inconvenient.

"So strange a disappointment as I met with," he writes from Bristol, "the extreme sensibility which I know is in your nature of such monstrous treatment, and the bitter reflection that I was wholly the unhappy cause of it, did really so distract me, while with you, that I could neither speak nor move nor act nor think. I was like a man stunned or stabbed, where he expected an embrace; and I was dejected to death, seeing I could do or say nothing to comfort, but everything rather to hurt you. But, for God's sake, know that I understood it was goodness and generosity you showed me, under the appearance of anger itself. When you bid me first to go to Lord B.'s from them, and then hasten thither, I was sensible it was in resentment of their conduct to me, and to remove me from such treatment, though you stayed alone to suffer it yourself. But I depended you would not have been a day longer in the house after I left you last; and of all I have endured, nothing gave me so much pain of heart as to find by your letter you were still under their roof. I dread their provoking you to any expression unworthy of you. Even *laughter* would be taking too much notice; but I more dread your spirits, and falling under such a dejection as renders you incapable of resolving on the means of getting out of all this. You frighten yourself more than, were you in any other house, you need do."

He goes on to suggest various methods of "getting out of it." If she wishes to go directly to London, she may, without the least danger, travel in a coach and six of the king's horses for six or seven pounds. But if she preferred to stay for a

few days, she could be carried in a chair to Lincombe. Or the Duchess of Queensberry would certainly send her coach part way to fetch her to Amesbury. "Or lastly, Mr. Arbuthnot and I will come in a very good coach from hence any day you name, take you up at Lincombe, or Lady Cox's, and carry you and your maid safe either to London or Amesbury. . . . All I beg is that you will not stay a moment at the only place in England (I am satisfied) where you can be so used; and where, for your sake and for my own too, I never will set foot more. However well I might wish the man, the woman is a minx and an impertinent one, and he will do what she will have him. I do not wonder they do not speak a word of me; [but] some words I have spoken to him. I shall not write till I get home, if then; but show my resentment without lessening myself. For God's sake do the same."[1]

The letter concludes:

"W. is a sneaking parson, and I told him he flattered."

Pope's first letter to Allen after his return to Twickenham is not among the manuscripts preserved, and there may have been good reason for the omission. But as soon as Warburton came to town he patched up a truce, for on September 13

[1] From Bristol Pope wrote to Bethel on August 16: "I wish we had consulted together about Miss Blount, who deserves all we can do, if ever a good heart deserved well. It would be very convenient to me, in the distribution of my affairs, to grant her an annuity of £100 a year, and take a £1,000, with which I would purchase the house at Twickenham, which I am convinced would be a wise bargain for me and my heirs." (From the unpublished MS.)

Pope was writing to his friend in something of the old cordial spirit. Although his asthma had been worse, he was contemplating one or two more short flights into the country before he settled down for the winter. He was going to Amesbury and Salisbury with Arbuthnot, and later we hear that he had been seduced into Oxfordshire in my Lord Cornbury's coach, stayed two days at Rousham, and then went to Oxford in the vain hope of finding Dr. King.

"However, I took possession of his lodging, and got away the next morning, undoctored the third time. . . . The doctor has had an escape, and so have I. Thence I made a visit to the Duchess of Queensberry, and so returned to Twickenham."

This was fairly "good going" for an invalid who could not stand "jumbling."

In October Allen was seriously ill with an "inflammatory fever," and almost as soon as he recovered Mrs. Allen was laid up. Pope professed to be much hurt because he was not kept informed of the condition of the two invalids. He assured Allen that he desired to preserve "not only his *form*, but the *strictness* and *essence* of our friendship."

CHAPTER LXI

1744

Cibber as Hero of "The Dunciad"—Last Illness and Death of Pope

THE complete "Dunciad," in four books, with Cibber as hero, *vice* Theobald deposed, was published in a quarto edition, under the editorship of Warburton, in 1743. In his Advertisement to the Reader, Warburton says:

"I have long had a design of giving some notes on the works of this poet. Before I had the happiness of his acquaintance I had written a commentary on his "Essay on Man," and have since finished another on his "Essay on Criticism." There was one already on the "Dunciad," which had met with general approbation; but I still thought that some additions were wanting (of a more serious kind) to the humorous notes of Scriblerus, and even to those written by Mr. Cleland, Dr. Arbuthnot, and others. I had lately the pleasure to pass some months with the author in the country, where I prevailed upon him to do what I had long desired, and favour me with his explanation of several passages in his works. It happened that just at that juncture was published a

ridiculous book against him,[1] full of personal reflections, which furnished him with a lucky opportunity of improving this poem by giving it the only thing it wanted, a more considerable hero. He was always sensible of its defects in that direction, and owned that he had let it pass with the hero he had purely for want of a better, not entertaining the least expectation that such a one was reserved for this post as has since obtained the laurel; but since that had happened, he could no longer deny this justice either to him or "The Dunciad." And yet, I will venture to say, there was another motive which had still more weight with our author; this person was one who, from every folly (not to say vice) of which another would be ashamed, has constantly derived a vanity, and therefore was the man in the world who would be the least hurt by it.—W. W."

This edition contained several new notes, four new appendixes, and "Ricardus Aristarchus on the Hero of the poem," a ponderous bit of pleasantry by Warburton. Although Pope has done his task of fitting the vivacious Laureate into the niche occupied by the industrious Theobald with skill and ingenuity, it is impossible to deny that the satire has suffered in the process.[2] The actual introduction of the new hero, under the name of Bayes (Cibber's favourite part in *The Rehearsal*), runs smoothly enough.

[1] Cibber's Letter to Pope.

[2] Johnson says that Pope "depraved his poem by giving to Cibber the old books, the old pedantry, and the sluggish pertinacity of Theobald."

Bayes, formed by nature stage and town to bless,
And act, and be, a coxcomb with success.
Dulness with transport eyes the lively dunce,
Rememb'ring she herself was Pertness once.
Now (shame to Fortune !) an ill run at play
Blanched his bold visage, and a thin third day:
Swearing and supperless the hero sate,
Blasphemed his gods, the dice, and damned his fate.

The absurdity comes in when Cibber is given a Gothic library containing Caxtons, Wynkyns, dry bones of divinity, and all the rest of the "classics of an age that heard of none."

The inconsistencies are more noticeable in the first book than in the other three, wherein the hero plays an almost passive part as a mere spectator of the scenes that show the power and glory of the goddess, or the folly of her subjects.

Cibber, encouraged by the *succès de scandale* of his former letter to Pope, rushed into print again (January 8, 1744) with "Another occasional Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope, wherein the new Hero's preferment to his throne in 'The Dunciad' seems not to be accepted, and the author of that poem his more rightful claim to it, is asserted. With an expostulatory address to the Rev. Mr. W. W——n, Author of the new Preface, and Adviser in the curious improvements of that Satire."

This letter is a heavy-handed, long-winded bit of abuse, unrelieved by the good-humour or scandalous anecdotes of the previous effusion. A brief specimen will suffice :

"If you had not been a blinder booby than myself you would have sate down quietly with the last black eye I gave you. For so loath was I to squabble with

you, that though you had been snapping and snarling at me for twenty years together, you saw I never so much as gave you a single growl, or took any notice of you. At last, 'tis true, in mere sport for others, rather than from the least tincture of concern for myself, I was enticed to be a little wanton, not to say waggish, with your character; by which, having got the strong laugh on my side, I doubt I have so offended the gravity and greatness of your soul that, to secure your more ample revenge, you have prudently taken the full term of thirteen months' consideration before you would pour it upon me."

The Letter seems to have attracted little attention from any one save Pope himself.

"I am told the Laureate is going to publish a very abusive pamphlet," he wrote to Warburton on January 12. "That is all I can desire; it is enough if it be abusive, and if it be his. He threatens you; but I think you will not fear or love him so much as to answer him, though you have answered one or two as dull. He will be more to me than a dose of hartshorn, and, as a stink revives one who has been oppressed with perfumes, his railing will cure me of a dose of flatteries.

"I am much more concerned to hear that some of your clergy are offended at a verse or two of mine, because I have respect for your clergy (though the verses are harder upon ours).[1] But if they do not

[1] The lines alluded to were introduced for the first time in this edition. Speaking of "the reverend flamen," the poet says:

> Around him wide a sable army stand,
> A low-born, cell-bred, selfish, servile band,
> Prompt or to guard or stab, to saint or damn,
> Heaven's Swiss, who fight for any God or man.

blame *you* for defending those verses, I will wrap myself in the layman's cloak, and sleep under your shield."

Richardson the Younger told Johnson that he attended his father, the painter, on a visit to Twickenham, when one of Cibber's pamphlets had just come into Pope's hands. "These things are my diversion," said Pope. They sat by him while he read it, and saw his features writhing with anguish. After the visitors had taken their leave young Richardson said to his father that he hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope. The poet, as Johnson says, should have suffered the pamphlets to flutter and die, without confessing that they stung him.

In February Pope had another sharp attack of asthma, which threatened to prove fatal. He apologised to Allen for remissness in writing on the ground that—

"I have been almost dying with a violent attack of the asthma, which at last resisted all medicines, and compelled me to the resource of letting blood, for present breath. It has succeeded, not only then, but I have mended so much upon it within three days that I can truly say it has given me more ease in that space than all the medicines besides in as many months." He sends much the same account to Warburton, and adds, "I have for some months thought myself going, and that not slowly, down the hill." He was, however, still busy revising his papers for the final edition of his works, to which Warburton was to play sponsor, and, on the slightest rally, found strength to visit his friends at Battersea.

The Allens were coming to town in March, and Pope invited them to stay at Twickenham. "I am sure we shall meet with the same hearts we ever met," he writes on March 6, "and I could wish it were at Twickenham, though only to see you and Mrs. Allen twice there instead of once. But as matters have turned out, a decent obedience to the Government has since obliged me to reside here, ten miles out of the capital and therefore I must see you here or nowhere.[1] Let that be an additional reason for your coming and staying what time you can.

"The utmost I can do, I will venture to tell you in your ear. I may slide along the Surrey side (where no Middlesex justice can pretend any cognisance) to Battersea, and thence across the water for an hour or two, in a close chair, to dine with you. But to be in town, I fear, will be imprudent, and thought insolent. At least hitherto, all comply with the proclamation. . . .

"It may possibly be that I shall be taking the secret flight I speak of to Battersea, before you come, with Mr. Warburton, whom I have promised to make known to the only great man in Europe who knows as much as he."[2]

[1] In consequence of the expected invasion of England by the French, a royal proclamation had been issued, forbidding all Roman Catholics to appear within ten miles of London. The French fleet actually appeared off the English coast about the end of February, including the transports that carried the Young Pretender and his troops. But a storm shattered the transports, and the fleet put back into Brest Harbour.

[2] The meeting duly took place, but the two great men failed to hit it off. They took a strong dislike to each other, and parted "in mutual disgust."

The last published letter to Martha Blount is dated Easter Day, March 25, and contains an account of Allen's visit to Pope, and the *éclaircissement* that had taken place on the subject of the great misunderstanding. Allen spent a night with Pope, and the poet expressed himself freely on the subject of the quarrel, requiring his friend to do the same.

"I told him what I thought of Mrs. Allen's conduct to me before you came," he relates, "and both hers and his after. He did pretty much what you expected: utterly denied any unkindness or coolness, and protested his utmost desire, and answered for hers, to have pleased you; laid it all upon the mutual dissatisfaction between you and her, and hoped I would not be altered towards him by any *misrepresentation* you might make—not that he believed you would tell an untruth, but that you saw things in a mistaken light. I very strongly told him you never made any such; nor, if he considered, was it possible, since all that had passed I saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears. I told him I did not impute the unkindness shown to me, in behaving so coldly, to him originally, but to Mrs. Allen; and fairly told him I suspected it to have proceeded from some jealousy she had of some designs we had upon his house at Hampton, and confirmed it by the reports I had heard of it from several hands. But he denied this utterly too. I pressed then, that she must have had some very unjust or bad thing suggested to her against you; but he assured me it all rested upon a *mutual misunderstanding* between you two, which appeared in two or three days, and which he spoke to his wife

about, but found he could not make her at all easy n ; and that he never in his whole life was so sorry at any disappointment. I said much more, being opener than I intended at first ; but finding him own nothing, but stick to this, I turned to make slighter of it, and told him he should not see my behaviour changed to Mrs. Allen, so much as hers had been to me (which he declared he did not see) ; and that I could answer for it, Miss Blount was never likely to take any notice of the whole, so far from misrepresenting any particular."

Together with this account, Pope sent Martha his letter to his doctor, that she might be apprised of the particulars of his condition.

"I assure you I do not think half so much what will become of me as of you ; and when I grow worst, I find the anxiety for you doubled. Would to God you would quicken your haste to settle, by reflecting what a pleasure it would be to me just to see it, and to see you at ease ; and then I could contentedly leave you to the providence of God in this life, and resign myself to it in the other. I have little to say to you when we meet, but I love you upon unalterable principles, which makes me feel my heart the same to you as if I saw you every hour."

Two last letters from Pope to Allen are among the unpublished papers. The first is dated April 20. The poet begins by congratulating his friends on their safe return home in spite of the wet weather. "As to my state, I have not escaped so well, that change having brought me rather worse than when parted ; so much that I have not been able to enjoy

the benefit of any air or exercise, which weakens me fast. You shall hear of any material alteration in me; the little circumstances could only trouble, not satisfy you. But of this be assured: no alterations of any other kind will ever befal me in respect to you, who have been, and shall ever be, just to your merit and friendship. Let Mrs. Allen know this, and that every day which adds to your joint happiness will alleviate the worst of my own days. . . ."[1]

Unluckily Pope had been persuaded by Bethel to try a quack doctor, Thompson by name, who recommended the use of waters in dropsical complaints. Bethel, who was a fellow-sufferer from asthma, suggests frequent bleeding, ass's milk, and gas of sulphur. Later, he reports, "I have heard of a great cure one Dr. Thompson has made upon Sir John Eyles, who had a violent asthma." Pope seems to have tried most of the nostrums that were recommended to him, but he tells Bethel in April that his own doctors have disagreed with "your Yorkshire Dr. Thompson" on the use of waters in a dropsical condition, and he is ordered to take comfortable things, rather than much physic.

"I am now so weak that I can hardly read or write at present, but shall as soon as I can. I feel my friendship for all my friends as strongly as ever, and for you as much as any."

In April the poet heard the sad tidings of the death of his old friend and guardian, Bounce, whom he had sent down some time before to Lord Orrery's place, Marston, in Somersetshire.

"I dread to inquire into the particulars of the

[1] From the unpublished MS.

fate of Bounce," he writes on the 10th. "Perhaps you concealed them, as Heaven often does unhappy events, in pity to the survivors, or not to hasten on my end by sorrow. I doubt not how much Bounce was lamented." His own days, he says, are somewhat more supportable, for his nights are better, though the grand cause of all, the shortness of breath, continues without any alteration, in spite of the quantity of medicines he had taken.

Dying as he was, Pope never lost his courage, and in May he dictated a last letter to Lord Orrery in which he says he is not as well as he could wish, but adds: "I have indeed a new physician, who tells me I shall be grateful to all my friends, and mend apace. . . . I go abroad almost every day in a chariot, but am very lethargic." [1]

Pope's last letter to Allen is also dictated. Cheselden was possibly the amanuensis, as the letter is dated May 10, Chelsea College, where Pope may have driven to consult his surgeon.

"I am unable," he says, "to express a great part of my good sentiments for you, much less to write; my weakness has increased every day. . . . I am following Sir John Eyles with as much vigour as my constitution will permit of, and I have the comfort to find Dr. Burton and Mr. Cheselden do not disapprove, allowing my asthma to be hydropsical." He sends his thanks to Dr. Hartley and Dr. Oliver

[1] This is endorsed by Lord Orrery, with a note of the contents. He says that the letter "concludes with professions of great kindness; but notwithstanding all the many and high assurances of friendship, gratitude, and affection in these letters, he forgot me in his will. *Mens curva in corpore curvo.*"

for their prescriptions, and adds: "There is no end of my kind treatment from the faculty. They are in general the most amiable companions and the best friends, as well as the most learned men, I know. I hope you and I shall preserve the friendship of all we know." In his own hand is written:

"My true services to you all, and Mrs. Allen and Mr. Warburton. I must just set my hand to my heart.

"Yrs.

"A. Pope."[1]

On May 19 Lord Orrery wrote to Mallet to ask for an account of "our matchless friend," of whose state he had heard alarming rumours. This was crossed by a letter from Mallet to Orrery, also dated May 19, which is evidently an answer to an earlier inquiry. He says he had been hoping to send a better account of Mr. Pope, but shall only afflict his lordship by what he has to say of him. "He still breathes, but cannot be said to live, for he has not the smallest enjoyment of life, hardly of his

[1] From the unpublished MS. Pope's friendship with Cheselden is commemorated in an epigram quoted by Horace Walpole in a letter to Mann. It was made, he says, by Dr. Munro on two of his brethren, a physician and a surgeon:

When Hulse for some trifling unorthodox jests
As unchristian was censured by bigots and priests,
He wisely resolved to wipe off the reproach,
And was seen with a parson six months in his coach.
When Cheselden saw that the scheme had success
He conceived in some sort it might suit his own case;
So to take an unlucky damn'd censure away,
He contrived to be seen with a wit every day:
And with Pope by his side, in the pride of his soul,
"Now damn ye," says he; "now d'ye think I'm a fool?"

reason." After having been treated for several months for an asthma by eminent physicians, Thompson had been called in, who declared that the disease was dropsy, and that he could cure it. He had given the sick man such strong medicines that his strength, as well as his senses, seemed to be irrecoverably impaired. "I staid with him all Friday evening and Saturday without being able to understand a word of what he would have said to me, till towards noon that I had him carried into the garden. There he recovered into some coherence of thought, talked intelligibly and rationally for above an hour, but grew weary, would return in to the house, where I left him, without the satisfaction of taking a last farewell of him."

Many anecdotes have been recorded of Pope's last days, and his sayings prove that his intellect had been but little clouded by his sickness. He had been sending round copies of Warburton's new edition of the "Moral Epistles" to his friends, and remarked *à propos* of these gifts: "Here am I, like Socrates, distributing my morality among my friends, just as I dying." He suffered much from "not being able to think," and wondered that there should be any such thing as human vanity after he had lost his mind for a whole day. "Here I am, dying of a hundred good symptoms," he said to Lyttelton, who came in just after Dr. Thompson had been telling him that he was much better, with a good pulse and easier breath.[1]

[1] Johnson says that Thompson was a man who had "by large promises, and free censures of the common practice of physic, forced himself up into sudden reputation."

Bolingbroke appeared to be suffering from the greatest melancholy and concern throughout these last days. "Oh, great God! what is man?" he exclaimed more than once, his speech interrupted with sobs, as he gazed on the dying poet. Spence told him that Pope, on every recovery of his mind, was always saying something kindly of his friends, and that it seemed as if his humanity had outlasted his reason. "It has," said Lord Bolingbroke. "I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or a more general friendship for mankind. I have known him these thirty years, and value myself more for that man's love——" sinking his head and losing his voice in tears.

Not only Bolingbroke, but Marchmont, Mallet, and Spence were devoted in their attendance upon the dying man. Johnson relates a story, inspired probably by Warburton, about Martha Blount's behaviour at this time:

"While he [Pope] was yet capable of amusement and conversation, as he was one day sitting in the air with Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Marchmont, he saw his favourite, Martha Blount, at the bottom of the garden, and asked Lord Bolingbroke to go and hand her up. Bolingbroke not liking his errand, crossed his legs and sat still; but Lord Marchmont, who was younger and less captious, waited on the lady, who, when he came to her, asked, 'What! is he not dead yet?' She is said to have neglected him with shameful unkindness in the latter part of his decay; yet of the little which he had to leave, she had a great part." Against this

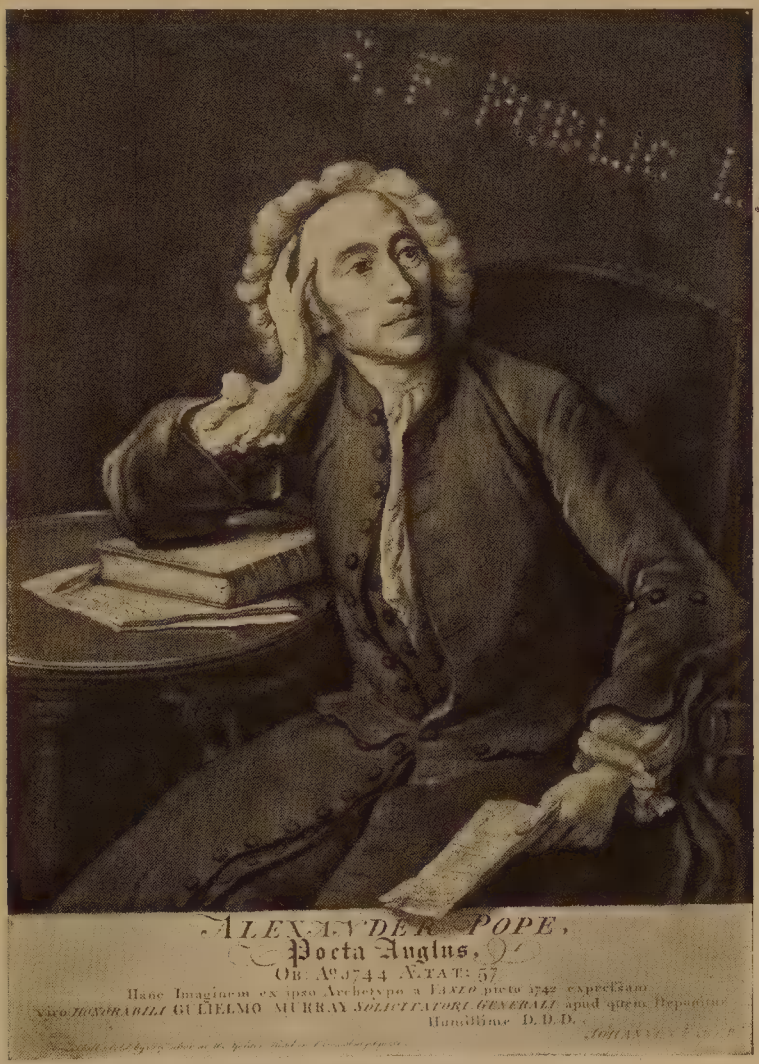
anecdote must be set Spence's statement: "It was very observable that Miss Blount's coming in gave a new turn of spirits, or a temporary strength, to the dying man."

Pope seems to have held a kind of levee every day, almost up to the last. On May 27, only three days before his death, he insisted on being brought to the table where his friends were dining. His appearance was such that all thought he was dying, and Mrs. Anne Arbuthnot involuntarily exclaimed, "Lord, have mercy upon us! this is quite an Egyptian feast."

When it was seen that death was very near, Hooke asked if he should not send for a priest, in order that the poet might die fortified by the rites of the Church, as his parents had done. Pope replied: "I do not suppose that it is essential, but it will look right: I heartily thank you for putting me in mind of it." Such was the fervour of the poet's devotion, says Warton, that he found strength to throw himself out of bed that he might receive the Last Sacrament kneeling. The priest came out from him penetrated to the last degree with the state of mind in which he had found his penitent, resigned and wrapped up in the love of God and man.

Pope died on May 30, aged fifty-six years and nine days. On June 1 Mallet wrote the following brief account of the end to Lord Orrery.

"On Monday last I took my everlasting farewell of him. He was enough himself to know me, to inquire after Mrs. Mallet's health, and anxiously to hasten his servant in getting ready my dinner,


ALEXANDER POPE,
Poeta Anglus,
OB. Ao 1744 ÆTAT: 57
Hanc Imaginem ex ipso Archetypo a LANZO picto 1742 expressam
Viro HONORABILI GULIELMO MURRAY SOLICITATORI GENERALI apud quem Deparatur
Humillime D.D.D.

From a mezzotint engraving after the painting by J. Faber.

ALEXANDER POPE AT THE AGE OF 57.

because I came late. The same social kindness, the same friendly concern for those he had loved, even in the minutest instances, that had distinguished his heart through life, were uppermost in his thoughts to the last. He died on Wednesday, about the middle of the night, without a pang or convulsion, unperceived of those that watched him, who imagined he was only in a sounder sleep than usual."

Pope had left directions that he should be buried in Twickenham Church, near his parents' monument. He was buried on June 5, and a stone in the middle aisle, marked "P," showed the spot. He ordered that after the words "filius fecit" on his parents' monument should be added only "et sibi; Qui obiit anno 17[44] ætatis [56]." Seventeen years later, Warburton, then Bishop of Gloucester, put up a monument to Pope on the north wall, with a medallion portrait, and the following tasteless inscription:

ALEXANDRO POPE
M. H.
GULIELMUS EPISCOPUS GLOCESTRIENSIS
AMICITIÆ CAUSÂ, FAC CUR,
MDCCLXI.

Poeta loquitur,

For one who would not be buried in Westminster Abbey

Heroes and kings, your distance keep!
In peace let one poor poet sleep,
Who never followed folks like you:
Let Horace blush, and Virgil too.

CHAPTER LXII

The Will—Discoveries by the Executors—Personal Characteristics

POPE appointed Lord Bathurst, Lord Marchmont, Mr. Murray, and George Arbuthnot the executors of his will. He left his manuscripts to Lord Bolingbroke, and the property in his printed works to Warburton. To Martha Blount he left £1,000 and all the furniture of his garden, his household goods and plate. She was also to have the interest of his residuary estate, which amounted to less than £2,000. The year before his death Pope had bought for Martha the lease of a house in Berkeley Row for £350, and this house she inhabited for the remainder of her life.

To his half-sister, Mrs. Rackett, Pope left only £300, but she and her family were to benefit from his estate to the extent of £1,000 after Miss Blount's death. To Ralph Allen the executors were ordered to pay £150, this sum being, to the best of the testator's calculations, the amount he had received from Allen, partly for his own and partly for charitable use.[1] To his old servant, John Searle, he left only £100 and a year's wages. There was also a long string of legacies—pictures, books, and

[1] This legacy, which was thought to show an unfriendly spirit towards Allen, is said to have been dictated by Martha Blount.

rings—bequeathed to the executors and other intimate friends of the poet.

The will caused a good deal of dissatisfaction among the survivors. Mrs. Rackett entered a caveat against it at Doctor's Commons, but nothing came of what Murray termed a weak and unworthy attempt. Allen gave his legacy to the Bath hospital, remarking that Mr. Pope was always a bad accountant, and that if he had put a cipher more to the £150 he would have come nearer the truth. He evidently thought that but meagre provision had been made for John Searle, for he doubled the legacy and took the old man into his own service. Lord Orrery, as we have seen, was annoyed at the omission of his name from Pope's will;[1] so, presumably, was Mallet, who, a few years later, became an instrument in the hand of Bolingbroke to blacken the poet's memory.

Pope's old critic and correspondent, Aaron Hill, who had alternately reproved and flattered him in his life-time, thus expressed himself in a letter to Samuel Richardson on the occasion of the poet's death:

"Mr. Pope, as you with equal keenness and propriety express it, *is gone out.* I told a friend of his, who sent me the first news of it, that I was very sorry for his death, because I doubted whether he would live to recover the accident. Indeed, it gives me no surprise to find you thinking he was in the wane of his popularity.[2] It arose, originally,

[1] He can only have expected some complimentary legacy, as a mark of his friendship with the poet.

[2] In March 1742 Horace Walpole had written to Richard West on the subject of the unpoetical quality of the age: "'Tis even a test of wit," he says, "to dislike poetry; and though Pope

but from meditated little personal assiduities, and a certain bladdery swell of management. He did not blush to have the cunning to blow himself up, by the help of dull unconscious instruments, whenever he would seem to sail as if his own wind moved him. . . .

"In fact, if anything was fine, or truly powerful in Mr. Pope it was chiefly centred in expression: and that rarely when not grafted on some other writer's preconceptions. His own sentiments were low and narrow, because always interested: darkly-touched, because conceived imperfectly; and sour and acrid because writ in envy. He had a turn for verse, without a soul for poetry. He stuck himself into his subjects, and his own muse partook his maladies, which, with a kind of peevish and vindictive consciousness, maligned the healthy and the satisfied. . . . But rest his memory in peace! It will very rarely be disturbed by the time he himself is in ashes." [1]

has half a dozen old friends that he has preserved from the taste of last century, yet I assure you the generality of readers are more diverted with any paltry prose answer to old Marlborough's secret history of Queen Mary's robes."

[1] In this connection, the reader may be reminded of the snub administered by Dr. Johnson to Allan Ramsay in 1778. Ramsay observed: "I am old enough to have been a contemporary of Pope. His poetry was highly admired in his life-time, more, a great deal, than after his death." "Sir," replied Johnson, "it has not been less admired since his death; no authors ever had so much fame in their own life-time as Pope and Voltaire; and Pope's poetry has been as much admired since his death as during his life; it has only been not so much talked of, but that is owing to its being now more distant, and people having other writings to talk of. Virgil is less talked of than Pope, and Homer is less talked of than Virgil; but they are not less admired."

Hill was no more successful as a prophet than as a poet or an inventor. Pope's poetical fame was made of lasting stuff, but the same can hardly be said of his moral reputation. Certain of his actions, whatever excuses might be found for them, did not "smell sweet and blossom in the dust." When his literary executors were looking through his papers, Bolingbroke discovered that Pope had prepared his four "Moral Epistles" for the press,[1] and that the Character of Atossa was inserted in the "Epistle to a Lady." Bolingbroke reported the matter to Marchmont, remarking, "I am sorry for it, because if he could be excused for writing the Character of Atossa formerly, there is no excuse for his design of publishing it after the favour you and I know. . . . Warburton has the propriety of it, as you know. Alter it he cannot by the terms of the will. Is it worth while to suppress the edition? Or should her grace's friends say (as they may from several strokes in it) that it was not intended for her character? And should she despise it?"

There is evidence that Pope had accepted a substantial "favour" from the duchess, and the sum was believed to be a thousand pounds. But that this transaction was in the nature of a definite bargain has not been proved. The money may have been given in return for a definite undertaking that the Characters of the Duke of Marlborough and of Atossa were to be suppressed,

[1] That is, for Warburton's edition. The poet had given away, as we have seen, a few copies of these newly edited poems just before his death, but it is possible that Bolingbroke had not read them.

or it may have been handed over unconditionally, though with the tacit understanding that it was to avert satire from the Churchill race. In either case the publication of "Atossa" in the duchess's lifetime would seem like a virtual breach of contract. But Pope no doubt justified the proceeding to his own accommodating conscience by adding a few "strokes" which would enable him, should Duchess Sarah insist on fitting on the cap, to apply the Character to the Duchess of Buckingham. His executors, however, were more scrupulous, and by arrangement with Warburton, the edition was suppressed.[1]

Bolingbroke's next discovery had more unpleasant consequences. Six years before he had asked Pope to arrange for the printing of a few copies of his "Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism and the Idea of a Patriot King." At the same time he had exacted a promise that the Letters should only be shown to half a dozen intimate friends, since there were passages in them that required altering and softening. Pope secretly made such alterations as he thought desirable, and ordered an edition of fifteen hundred copies to be struck off. The printer, in whose charge the edition was left, came to Bolingbroke after Pope's death, and informed him of the transaction. Bolingbroke was furious at what he regarded as an act of treachery, the more so as he suspected that the "improvements" had been made at the instigation of Warburton. Having picked out one or two copies for his own future use, he made a bonfire of the remainder

[1] The duchess died in 1744, a few months after Pope.

of the edition on the terrace of his house at Battersea.[1]

In 1746 the "Character of Atossa" was published on a folio sheet, with the following explanation:

"These verses are part of a poem entitled 'Characters of Women.' It is generally said the D—— gave Mr. P. £1,000 to suppress them. He took the money, yet the world sees the verses; but this is not the first instance where Mr. P.'s practical virtue has fallen very short of those pompous professions of it he makes in his writings."[2]

Three years later, in 1749, Bolingbroke published, through Mallet's agency, the "Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism," together with a long advertisement, which gave an account of the secret printing of the suppressed edition. Pope is described as "a man on whom the author thought he might entirely depend," but no sooner was he dead than his lordship discovered the flagrant breach of trust of which "this person" had been guilty. Warburton undertook Pope's defence in a "Familiar Epistle to Lord Bolingbroke, occasioned by his treatment of a deceased friend." The defence is singularly ineffective; but then Warburton had a weak case. He admits that his friend had committed a serious error, but attempts to excuse it, in the first instance,

[1] Lord Marchmont told Mr. Rose, his executor, that Ralph Allen esteemed the "Letters on Patriotism" so highly that he persuaded Pope to allow him to print an edition at his own expense. He promised that copies should be shown to none but the chosen few.

[2] The publication of this sheet is attributed to Mallet, who was Bolingbroke's instrument.

on the plea that Mr. Pope was a man, and that no man was ever perfect. He is on stronger ground when he inquires what motive the poet could have had for printing off a secret edition except excessive zeal and admiration for his lordship, who should have lamented in silence, and concealed the faults of such a man and such a friend. Bolingbroke replied, through Mallet, with a "Letter to the most Impudent Man living," which attracted some attention on account of its striking title, but is not otherwise worthy of detailed consideration.

A glance may be given to the after-career of one or two of Pope's most intimate friends. Swift was released by death from his living tomb in 1745. Bolingbroke spent a discontented old age at his house in Battersea, where he died in December 1751. Martha Blount took possession of the house in Berkeley Row, and here she lived until her death in 1763.[1] We get a vivid glimpse of her in a letter written by Horace Walpole to Hannah More in 1786. Alluding to the many historic characters he has seen and known, he says: "I was standing at my window after dinner, in summer, in Arlington Street, and saw Patty Blount, with nothing remaining of her immortal charms but her blue eyes, trudging on foot, with her petticoats pinned up, for it rained, to visit 'Blameless Bethel,' who was sick at the end of the street."[2]

Henry Swinburne, the traveller,[3] who was related

[1] Teresa Blount died in 1759.

[2] Hugh Bethel survived Pope nearly four years, dying in January, 1748.

[3] Son of Sir John Swinburne. He published "Travels through Spain" and "Travels in the Two Sicilies."

to the Blounts, described Martha as "a little, neat, fair, prim old woman, easy and gay in her manner and conversation, but seeming not to possess any extraordinary talent." Carruthers quotes a letter of condolence from Thomas Phillips[1] to Michael Blount, Martha's nephew, on the death of his aunt: "I had known her intimately for ten years," says Phillips, "and found I had reason to value her in proportion as I was acquainted with her. Her conversation was not entertaining only, but improving in a very uncommon degree. It is hard to say if she was more estimable for good sense and universal knowledge, or for being exempt from all affectation and desire of appearing to have any other merit than what generally falls to women of her rank."

In 1745 Warburton married Gertrude Tucker, the niece and heiress of Ralph Allen, who gave her a handsome dowry.[2] Through Allen's influence with Pitt, Warburton was made Dean of Bristol in 1757, and Bishop of Gloucester in 1759. In the course of the famous conversation between George III. and Dr. Johnson in 1762, the king observed that Pope had made Warburton a bishop. "True, sir," replied Johnson; "but Warburton did more for Pope: he made him a Christian."

In 1745 Warburton brought out his long-expected edition of Pope's works, which Hurd declared was the best edition that had ever been published of any

[1] Phillips was a Catholic priest, and author of a Life of Cardinal Pole.

[2] Allen died in 1764. He married a second time, late in life, and left one son, also named Ralph.

classic. Hurd's verdict has not been endorsed by posterity. Warburton's cumbrous commentaries hang like a dead weight upon the genius of his author, while he took the unwarrantable liberty of using the notes as the vehicle for attacks upon contemporary writers whom he regarded as his personal enemies.[1]

If we may believe his own words, the chief aim and object of Pope's life was to be regarded, not as a great poet, but as an honest man, a loyal, affectionate friend, and a true lover of his kind. But, high as his moral reputation stood in his life-time, Time and Fate, to say nothing of certain conscientious editors, have combined to dash him from his lofty pedestal, and expose him before the world as a hero of petty intrigues and third-rate mysteries. Lady Bolingbroke declared that Pope played the politician about cabbages and turnips, and he was not unjustly compared to Young's Julia, of whom it was said:

> For her own breakfast she'll project a scheme,
> Nor take her tea without a stratagem.

Julia was a woman, and Pope's upbringing was more like that a studious girl than of a boy. The result was that, genius apart, he bore throughout his life a certain resemblance to the typical old-fashioned spinster of comedy and fiction, if not of real life. His education, as we have seen, had been desultory and self-given, like that of a clever girl, while his feeble constitution, which prevented him from taking part in rough games

[1] Warburton died in 1779.

and sports, drove him to find solace in the more effeminate occupations of reading, verse-writing, amateur painting, and gardening. Spinster-like was the timidity that led to unnecessary deceptions, combined with the heady, impulsive courage that is daring in attack and abject in retreat. Pope was as spiteful an enemy, as unreasoning a partisan, and as gushing a friend as the school-girl before she has learnt cricket. But the finer attributes of the maidenly character were his not less than the defects. He displayed great fortitude and patience under suffering, he was an excellent sick-nurse, and his filial devotion is notorious. He was seldom without three or four *protégés* on his hands, whom he helped liberally, not only with money, but with time, interest, and trouble. He showed in early life a certain spirit of quixotism which moved him to throw himself recklessly into family quarrels (as in the cases of Mrs. Weston and Mrs. Cope), when his only object was to champion the injured or oppressed. There was something of the woman in his love for animals, and his hatred of the thoughtless cruelty which was commonly practised towards the lower creation. He confessed to having kissed Bounce when, after Mrs. Pope's death, the creature was the only friend left to greet him at his home.

"When my brother's faithful dog, and companion in his walks, died," said Mrs. Rackett, "he had some thoughts of burying him in his garden, and putting a piece of marble over his grave, with the epitaph, 'O Rare Bounce!' and he would have done it, I believe, had not he apprehended that some people might take it to have been meant as a ridicule of

Ben Jonson." Spence tells us that Pope used to say that Dr. Hales was a very good man, only he was sorry that his hands were so much imbrued in blood. "What, he cuts up rats?" asked Spence. "Ay, and dogs too," replied the poet. "Indeed, he commits most of these barbarities with the thought of being of use to man. But how do we know that we have a right to kill creatures that we are so little above as dogs, for our curiosity, or even for some use to us?"

Pope's manipulation of facts was the result probably of the Jesuitical rather than the feminine habit of mind. The truth he seems to have regarded as something to be used or disregarded according as it suited his convenience. A downright verbal lie he rarely told, but he "equivocated pretty genteelly," while leaving some loop-hole out of which to creep when directly taxed with falsehood. This tendency towards evasion and sophistry certainly grew upon him, but he was to the last a most careless, clumsy liar.[1] His transparent deceptions met with little or no condemnation from his friends, though they were a useful weapon in the hands of his enemies.[2] Though human nature may not change from age

[1] There are certain parts of Pope's Correspondence which remind the reader too vividly of his own lines:

> Who shames the scribbler? break one cobweb through,
> He spins the slight, self-pleasing thread anew.
>
> *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.*

[2] De Quincey held that "Pope's contemporaries knew that he was insincere, intriguing, touchy, and spiteful, but as nobody was much harmed by his conduct, they could not think it very criminal. Perhaps his physical weakness made them more indulgent to his selfish and sprite-like temper. But, apart from this, intriguing was the way of his world, a fact too much kept out of sight when Pope is denounced for his 'crooked ways in little matters.'"

to age, the standards of honour and morality change, and the last half of Pope's life was passed in a period of corruption. Mr. Courthope has drawn attention to the curious analogy that exists between the poetical career of Pope and the political career of Walpole. During the first half of the eighteenth century Pope stands out as the predominant figure in poetry and Walpole as the predominant figure in politics, while each great man thought it necessary to use corrupt methods in order to maintain his supremacy. That both poet and minister found men of the highest position willing to serve as their tools only shows the low standards of the age. It would be impossible in these days to point to three peers of the standing of Lords Oxford, Burlington, and Cobham who would consent to act as the publishers of a libellous satire, however great its literary merit. Nor could we imagine any high-born book-collector allowing a modern poet to use his library as Pope used Lord Oxford's.

Judged from certain portions of his Correspondence Pope must be condemned as a hypocrite, but it is doubtful how far he was a conscious hypocrite. There are indications that he deceived himself more completely than he deceived his friends. It seems to have been the fashion of his circle to pose as the champions of virtue, and to prate of honesty and benevolence while practising the easy-going morality of men of the world.[1] Pope, Swift, and Bolingbroke, as Warton says, appear to have formed a kind of haughty triumvirate, in order

[1] Pope always talked of "my morals" as if they were physical organs,

to issue forth proscriptions against all who would not adopt their sentiments and opinions. And, by their own account of themselves, they would have it believed that they had engrossed and monopolised all the genius and all the honesty of the age in which, according to their opinion, they had the misfortune to live.

Pope could satirise the vices of the Duke of Wharton, the corrupt methods of Walpole, and the folly of Cibber, but he had no word of reproach for the profligacy of Bathurst, the misanthropy of Swift, the scheming of Bolingbroke, nor the gluttony of Gay. In resounding verse Pope boasted of his courageous resolve to lash the public vices of the age. But shortly after the appearance of the Dialogues "Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight" Whitehead was summoned to the Bar of the House of Lords for a satire entitled "Manners." This proceeding is said to have been intended as a roundabout hint to Pope that satirists had better take heed to their ways. In 1740 Henry Fox reproached Lyttelton in the House of Commons with the friendship of "a lampooner," who scattered his wit without fear or decency. Fox expressed a hope that the resentment of the legislature would quickly be discharged against this offender. Lyttelton vindicated his friendship with Pope, "who never afterwards attempted to join the patriot with the poet, nor drew his pen upon statesmen." [1]

Though he describes himself as a voracious reader, Pope is curiously reticent on the subject of contemporary literature. Scarcely any books are

[1] Dr. Johnson.

mentioned in his letters except the works of such intimate friends as Swift and Gay, the libellous attacks of the dunces, and the feeble tributes from Harte and Miller. It would have been interesting to know what he thought of Thomson's "Seasons"[1] (some lines in which he retouched) and the poems of Savage and Young. He condescends to no criticism of "Joseph Andrews," though he mentions that the book contains a sketch of Allen's garden. It is only through the correspondence of Richardson that we know he read and approved of "Pamela." Mr. Leake told Richardson that both Mr. Pope and Mr. Allen were very high in their praises of "Pamela." They had each read it twice at least, and could not bear any one to point out faults in the story. Mr. Pope had gone so far as to say that it would do more good than many sermons.

Very little has been recorded of Pope's conversation. Johnson says that "traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, or sentences of observation; nothing either pointed or solid, wise or merry. One apophthegm only stands upon record. When an objection raised against his inscription for Shakespeare was defended by the authority of Patrick, he replied—*horresco referens*—that he would allow the publisher of a dictionary to know the meaning of a single word, but not of two words put together."

If Pope ever shone as a talker it was among a very few intimate friends. He said himself that whereas he could relate an anecdote very successfully to two or three listeners, he would be quite at a loss if called upon to repeat it to a dozen. Like

[1] Published in 1730.

Swift, he was never heard to laugh ;[1] he was inattentive when he had a "poetical scheme" in his head; and he had a bad habit of going to sleep in company. Chesterfield says that Pope, in conversation, was below himself. "He was seldom easy and natural, and seemed afraid that the man should degrade the poet, which made him always attempt wit and humour, often unsuccessfully, and too often unseasonably. I have been with him a week at a time at his house at Twickenham, where I necessarily saw his mind in its undress, when he was both an agreeable and instructive companion."

There are other witnesses, however, who report more favourably on Pope's conversational powers. A friend of Tom Tyers, who used to meet the poet at Lord Radnor's, where he was allowed to do as he liked, said that Pope's conversation was of the most agreeable kind, and that it was impossible to change one word for the better in the course of the longest conference. "His table-talk became a banquet for the next day." Lord Somerville, again, informed Boswell that he had dined in company with Pope, and that after dinner "the little man" drank his bottle of Burgundy, and was exceedingly gay and entertaining.

Pope has been described by Lady Hervey and others as a hypochondriac, for ever occupied with his imaginary ailments. But no one who reads the description of the poet's physical condition, quoted by Johnson from the statement by one of Lord

[1] According to Mrs. Rackett. But Mr. Berkeley told Lady Suffolk that at Rousham Pope had laughed himself fat at General Dormer's expense.

Oxford's servants, can believe that his complaints of his ill health were not well-founded :

"He was then [in middle age] so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance ; extremely sensible of cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet under a skirt of very coarse warm linen, with fine sleeves. When he rose he was invested in a bodice made of stiff canvas, being hardly able to stand erect till it was laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender that he enlarged their bulk with three pairs of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid ; for he was not able to dress or undress himself. . . . His hair had fallen almost away, and he used to dine sometimes with Lord Oxford, privately, in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black, with a tie-wig, and a little sword. . . . The reputation which his friendship gave procured him many invitations, but he was a very troublesome inmate. He brought no servant, and had so many wants that a numerous attendance was scarcely able to supply them. . . . One of his constant demands was for coffee in the night,[1] and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber he was very burthensome : but he was careful to recompense her want of sleep ; and Lord Oxford's servant declared that, in the house where her business was to answer his call, she would not ask for wages." [2]

[1] He inhaled the steam of coffee for his severe headaches.

[2] In an undated letter to Lord Oxford Pope says : "I cannot but thank your lordship for the great indulgence and liberty you gave me, in my variety of negotiations at your house, in my irregular entrances and exits, in my unreasonable suppers and separate breakfasts, and in all my ways."

An interesting description of the poet's appearance has been left by Sir Joshua Reynolds. When the painter first came to London he was the pupil of Hudson, by whom he was sent one day to a sale of pictures. While standing near the auctioneer the boy heard a bustle at the other end of the crowded room, and thought some one had fainted. However, he soon heard the name of "Mr. Pope!" "Mr. Pope!" echoed from every mouth, and all the people, as the poet passed, held out their hands for him to take. Reynolds, though not in the front row, stretched out his hand under the arm of a man who stood before him, and Pope took it in his, and this he did to all he passed.

The boy used his eyes to advantage. In later years he described the poet in the following terms: "He was about four feet six high, very hump-backed and deformed. He had a very large and very fine eye, and a long, handsome nose; his mouth had those peculiar marks which are always found in the mouths of crooked persons, and the muscles which ran across the cheeks were so strongly marked as to appear like small cords." Roubiliac, the statuary, who made a bust of him from life, observed that his countenance was that of a person who had been much afflicted with headache, and that he should have known the fact from the contracted appearance of the skin above the eyebrows, though he had not been otherwise apprised of it.

CHAPTER LXIII

The Pope Controversy

IN 1756 Joseph Warton brought out the first volume of his "Essay on the Genius and Writings of Alexander Pope," a curiously discursive work, which seems to have been composed with the object of showing the reading of Warton rather than discussing the writing of Pope. In the preface, which was addressed to Dr. Young, Warton boldly announced that, deeply as he revered the memory of Pope, and greatly as he admired his abilities, he could not place him at the head of his profession. "In other words," he explains, "in that species of poetry wherein Pope excelled, he is superior to all mankind; and I only say that this species of poetry is not the most excellent one of the art."

With this announcement, the heretical daring of which can scarcely now be estimated, the first shot was fired in the great Pope controversy. Warton proceeded to divide the English poets into four classes. In the first class he placed the three great imaginative poets, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton; in the second class Dryden, Cowley, Waller, Prior, Garth, Gay, Fenton, and other lesser lights, who shone more especially in moral and panegyrical

poetry; in the third class men of wit and taste, such as Butler, Donne, Rochester, Dorset and Swift; in the fourth class the mere versifiers, such as Buckingham, Lansdowne, and Broome.[1] The Essay was intended to determine the class to which Pope belonged.

Warton remarked, with perfect justice, that the works of the great Mr. Pope had never been the subject of fair and candid criticism, and, in the innocence of his heart, he thought that it would be no unpleasing amusement to examine at large, without blind panegyric or impotent invective, the writings of the English classic. At the present day Warton would be considered a most generous and appreciative critic, but his suggestion that didactic poetry, however "correct," was not the highest kind of poetry, and that Pope did not stand on the same plane as Milton, brought condemnation upon his book and unpopularity upon himself.

It was twenty-six years before Warton published his second volume, at the close of which he attempted to answer his own question: "Where shall we, with justice, be authorised to place our admired Pope?" The answer, taken by itself, ought to have satisfied every reasonable admirer of Pope: "Not assuredly in the same rank with Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton . . . but, considering the correctness, elegance, and utility of his works, the weight of sentiment, and the knowledge of man they contain, we may venture to assign

[1] It is curious that Chaucer finds no place in Warton's catalogue.

him a place next to Milton and just above Dryden. Yet, to bring our minds steadily to make this decision, we must forget, for a moment, the divine Music Ode of Dryden, and may, perhaps, then be compelled to confess that, though Dryden be the greater genius, yet Pope is the better artist."

But Warton was not content with putting Pope in his "proper place," for, greatly daring, he contended that the sublime and the pathetic were the two chief nerves of all genuine poetry, and inquired what there was of the sublime or the pathetic in Pope. This was whittling away the poet's claims with a vengeance. If Pope were only placed at the head of a second-rate didactic school, and if didactic poetry were not genuine poetry, the logical conclusion was that Pope was not a genuine poet. Hence the battle-cries of controversy.

In 1769 a feebly written "Life of Pope" was published by Ruffhead, who, inspired by Warburton, attempted to refute the damaging contentions of Warton. In 1781 came Johnson's valuable little memoir of Pope in his "Lives of the Poets," from which several passages have been quoted. Johnson draws an interesting comparison between Dryden and Pope, remarking that Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. "The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope. . . . If the flights of Dryden are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and

constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight." [1]

If Johnson stripped away some of Pope's critical and philosophical pretensions with rather a heavy hand, he had no doubt about Pope's place on Parnassus. "If Pope be not a poet," he asks, "where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only show the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made." [2]

In 1806 a new impetus was given to the Pope controversy by the Rev. W. Lisle Bowles's edition of "Pope's Works and Correspondence." Bowles, a sonneteer of no mean quality, and a friend of the Lake poets, went even further than Warton in his depreciation of the correct school.[3] Moreover, in dealing with Pope's character and career, he showed no inclination to gloss over the less favourable traits, or to condone the more doubtful episodes. He dealt sternly with the Correspondence

[1] In 1765 Boswell records the following conversation with Johnson: "I told him that Voltaire, in a conversation with me, distinguished Pope and Dryden thus: 'Pope drives a handsome chariot, with a couple of neat, trim nags; Dryden a coach and six stately horses.' *Johnson*: 'Why, sir, the truth is, they both drive coaches and six; but Dryden's horses are either galloping or stumbling; Pope's go at a steady even trot.'"

[2] Horace Walpole describes Johnson's "Memoir of Pope" as a trumpery performance, stuffed with crabbed phrases, vulgarisms, and trashy anecdotes. He quotes Johnson's observation that the constituent and fundamental principle of Pope's character was good sense, "a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety." "Was good sense ever so mercilessly overlaid by a babbling old woman?" asks Horace.

[3] Bowles had been a pupil of Warton's at Winchester.

conspiracy and the Atossa incident, and he put the worst construction on the relations between Pope and Martha Blount. Bowles had been allowed to examine the unpublished manuscripts at Mapledurham, and there was a certain "I could an' I would" air about his treatment of this connection that at once tantalised and infuriated the admirers of the poet.

In 1809 Byron made a bitter attack in his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" upon Bowles's criticism of Pope. A few lines may be quoted to show the quality of the onslaught :

> Or had'st thou lived in that congenial time,
> To rave with Dennis, or with Ralph to rhyme,
> Strayed with the rest around his living head,
> Nor raised thy foot against the lion dead;
> A meet reward had crowned thy glorious gains,
> And linked thee to "The Dunciad" for thy pains!

In 1819 Roscoe published his edition of Pope's "Works," together with a memoir couched in the old-fashioned "My hero, right or wrong" style. In his attempt to disprove the Bowles heresies, Roscoe was reinforced, a year later, by the appearance of Spence's "Anecdotes of Pope," which represent the poet's character in the rosiest light. Isaac Disraeli, dealing with the book in *The Quarterly Review*, made a fresh onslaught on Bowles, whom he accused of practising "the black art of criticism." Campbell had already joined in the fray,[1] and Byron let fly indiscriminately at every one who had ventured to doubt Pope's supremacy as poet and moralist.

[1] In his "Specimens of the British Poets."

The author of "Don Juan" frankly declared that he thought all modern poets were in the wrong, not excepting himself.

"I am the more confirmed in this," he remarks, "by having lately gone over some of our classics, particularly Pope, whom I tried in this way: I took Moore's poems and my own and some others and went over them side by side with Pope's, and I was really astonished (I ought not to have been so) and mortified at the ineffable distance in the point of sense, harmony, effect, and even *Imagination*, *Passion*, and *Invention* between the little Queen Anne's man, and us of the Lower Empire. Depend upon it, it is all Horace then, and Claudian now, among us; and if I had to begin again, I would model myself accordingly."

In another letter Byron asserts that the deplorable state of modern English poetry was due to the systematic depreciation of Pope. Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, he complains, were inspired by a natural antipathy to Pope, and were joined by the Edinburgh Reviewers and the whole mass of living English poets, except Crabbe, Rogers, Gifford, Campbell, and himself. He declares that he would rather see all that he had written lining a trunk than sacrifice what he felt to be the Christianity of poetry, the poetry of Pope. Alluding to the harmony of Pope's versification, Byron adds, "It is this very harmony which has raised the vulgar and atrocious cant against him; because his versification is perfect, it is assumed that it is his only perfection; because his truths are so clear, it is asserted that he has no invention, and because

he is always intelligible, it is taken for granted that he has no genius."[1]

Bowles, a "fighting parson" if ever there was one, defended his theories through many pamphlets, written in the ill-bred, ill-tempered, and often illogical style that was fashionable in the controversial literature of the day. Bowles's contention was that "The subject and the execution are equally to be considered; the one respecting the poetry, the other the art and talents of the poet. With regard to the first, Pope cannot be placed among the highest order of poets; with regard to the second, none was ever his equal."

Bowles was not fighting single-handed. At his back was the new generation of romantic poets with the "Minstrels of the Lake" at their head. The scolding pamphlets on either side have long been forgotten, but the attitude of the Romantic School towards the correct School has been crystallised by Keats in his "Sleep and Poetry." The passage is well worth quoting:

> A schism
> Nurtured by foppery and barbarism
> Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
> Men were thought wise who could not understand
> His glories: with a puling infant's force
> They swayed about upon a rocking-horse,
> And thought it Pegasus. Ah, dismal souled!
> The winds of heaven blew, the ocean rolled
> Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue
> Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew

[1] In his letter to John Murray on Bowles's "Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope" (1821) Byron asserts that Pope's works were better worth preserving than those of Shakespeare and Milton.

> Of summer nights collected still to make
> The morning precious : beauty was awake !
> Why were ye not awake ? But ye were dead
> To things ye knew not of—were closely wed
> To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
> And compass vile : so that ye taught a school
> Of dolts to smoothe, inlay, and clip and fit,
> Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
> Their verses tallied. Easy was the task ;
> A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
> Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race !
> That blasphemed the bright lyrist to his face,
> And did not know it,—no, they went about,
> Holding a poor decrepid standard out
> Marked with most flimsy mottoes, and in large
> The name of one Boileau.

The acute stage of the controversy lasted about thirty years. With the second decade of the nineteenth century Pope's name began to be handled with more freedom and fearlessness. His critics were less apologetic in their censure, and his admirers could admit that he was not without his faults. It became the fashion to deny his claims to "correctness," while admitting that he sometimes wrote "poetical" poetry. His moral character was somewhat harshly handled by the Whigs, but leniently regarded by the Tories.

De Quincey boldly declared that Pope was incorrect both in thought and expression. "Rare is the man among classical writers," he exclaims, "who has more disfigured his meaning by imperfect expressions—plebeian phrases, slang, and bad syntax. His grammar is often vicious. His syntax is so bad as to darken his meaning at times, at other times to defeat it. . . . Pope's defect lay in an

inability, nursed by indolence, to carry out and perfect the expression of his thought." After quoting an obscure couplet, he continues: "There are endless varieties of this fault in Pope by which he sought relief for himself from half an hour's labour, at the price of utter darkness to the reader." [1]

De Quincey refused to believe that there was either genuine malice or serious moral indignation behind the "Satires." Pope, he believed, was contented enough with society as he found it, and he was a hypocrite of the first water when he pretended to be in a dreadful passion with offenders as a body. "The short puffs of anger, the uneasy snorts of fury in Pope's satires, give one the feeling of a locomotive engine with unsound lungs."

To Hazlitt we owe some of the most delightful and discriminating criticism that has been written about Pope. He denied that Pope was a great poet in the sense of one who gives the utmost grandeur to our conception of nature, or the utmost power to the passion of the heart. "He was a wit and critic, a man of sense, observation, and the world. He saw nature only dressed by art; he judged of beauty by fashion; he sought for truth in the opinions of the world. He was the poet

[1] Pope's occasional obscurity was not the result of indolence, but of his desire to pack as much meaning as possible into each couplet. His syntax will not always quite bear the strain of condensation. Dodsley, the printer, told Johnson that the two Dialogues "Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight" were brought to him by Pope that they might be fairly copied. "Almost every line was then written twice over. I gave him a clear transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with every line written twice over a second time."

of personality and of polished life. . . . He had none of the enthusiasm of poetry; he was in poetry what the sceptre is in religion. His Muse was on a peace establishment. Yet within his retired and narrow circle, how much, and that how exquisite, was contained! What discrimination, what wit, what delicacy, what fancy, what lurking spleen, what elegance of thought, what pampered refinement of sentiment! . . . His compliments are divine, equal in value to a house or an estate." Hazlitt concludes his Essay with the somewhat surprising declaration: "If I had to choose, there are but one or two persons—and but one or two—that I should like to have been better than Pope."

A Tory poet who had lived on ill terms with Mr. Secretary Addison, could look for small mercy from a Whig historian. While carping at the discredited heroic couplet and the outworn ideals of correctness, Macaulay fell with his whole force upon Pope's moral reputation, and tore it to tatters with the glittering weapon of his rhetoric. The poet-moralist's own life, we are assured, was one long series of tricks, as mean and malicious as that of which he accused Addison. "He was all stiletto and mask. To injure, to insult, and to save himself the consequences of injury and insult by lying and equivocating, was the habit of his life. . . . He puffed himself, and abused his enemies, under feigned names. He robbed himself of his own letters, and then raised the hue and cry after them. Besides his frauds of malignity, of fear, of interest, and of vanity, there were frauds which he seems to have committed

from love of fraud alone. He had a habit of stratagem, a pleasure in outwitting all who came near him. Whatever his object might be, the indirect road to it was that which he preferred. . . . A distorted and diseased body, tenanted by a yet more distorted and diseased mind; spite and envy thinly disguised by sentiments as benevolent and noble as those which Sir Peter Teazle admired in Mr. Joseph Surface; a feeble, sickly licentiousness; an odious love of filthy and noisome images; these were things which a genius less powerful than that to which we owe *The Spectator* could easily have held up to the mirth and hatred of mankind."

This passage, with its mixture of truth and malicious exaggeration, with its artful heightening of the shadows and its deliberate suppression of the lights, is a fine specimen of what Disraeli might have called "the black art of biography."

It is, of course, impossible to follow the generations of Pope biographers, editors, and critics down through the century. Thackeray, it will be remembered, treated the poet from a sentimental point of view, though he complained that "it was Pope who had made generations of the reading world (delighted with the mischief, as who would not be that read it?) believe that author and wretch, author and rags, author and dirt, author and drink, gin, cowheel, tripe, poverty, duns, bailiffs, squalling children and clamorous landladies, were always associated together. The conditions of authorship began to fall from the days of 'The Dunciad,' and I believe in my heart that much of that obloquy which has since pursued our

calling was occasioned by Pope's libels and wicked wit."

It cannot be denied that Pope is somewhat neglected by the "general reader" at the present day. Men of letters still adore his "form," while the old-fashioned still appreciate his sense. But the modern reader, when he takes a course of poetry, is inclined to skip the eighteenth century.[1]

There are several reasons for the present neglect of Pope and his school. In the first place, the didactic in art is out of fashion. We demand emotions, not morals, in our poetry. The modern minstrel is free to record his feelings, his observations, and his experiences, but what he has learnt in suffering he is not permitted to teach in song. If any person openly professed to write poetry with a view to "doing good," inculcating common sense, or purifying the political atmosphere, his efforts would certainly be laughed to scorn. Maxims, aphorisms, and epigrams are no longer regarded as the material out of which true poetry can be made. Besides, Pope and his disciples played for safety; they sought for the right word, but they shunned the unexpected. To-day we crave for daring, for the new epithet, the freshly minted word, the adjective that startles and sticks. "We demand new ideas and bare sentiments; we care no longer for the clothing, we want the thing. Exordiums, transitions, peculiarities of style, elegance

[1] In an Anthology of English verse published a few years ago, which professed to give only the choicest specimens of poetry, not a single line was quoted from the work of the eighteenth-century poets.

of expression, the whole literary wardrobe is sent to the old-clothes shop; we only keep what is indispensable; we trouble ourselves no more about adornment, but about truth."[1]

The heroic couplet has been discredited by generations of second-rate warblers who had got the tune by heart. The modern reader is accustomed to have his appetite tempted by a variety of metric dishes; he cannot be content to feast off one, however excellent the quality. But more than from the limitations of his chosen instrument, Pope has suffered from the personal and topical nature of his subjects. Only a close student of the literary history of the eighteenth century can fully understand and appreciate the satire of "The Dunciad." The same objection applies, though in a minor degree, to the "Epistles" and the "Imitations." The historical and biographical interest of the satirical "Characters" has suffered from the partisan spirit in which they are written.[2] Pope could see none of his contemporaries steadily, and few of them whole. They were either friends, saints, heroes, and Tories, or enemies, knaves, dunces, and Whigs. But in this respect the poet was only the child of his period. When Voltaire came to England in 1726, he found party feel-

[1] Taine.

[2] Pope professed to draw a distinction between satire and libel. "There is not in the world," he says, "a greater error than that which fools are so apt to fall into, and knaves with good reason to encourage, the mistaking a satirist for a libeller; whereas to a true satirist nothing is so odious as a libeller, for the same reason as to a man truly virtuous nothing is so hateful as a hypocrite." But Pope himself often oversteps the bounds of true satire, just as his virtue sometimes lapsed into hypocrisy.

ing so violent in London that he was assured the Duke of Marlborough was a coward and Mr. Pope a fool!

But for the true lover of Pope, the equisite "filagree work" of the "Rape of the Lock," the force and brilliance of the "Epistles," and the biting wit of the "Imitations of Horace," can never lose the potency of their charm. In those most original of all "Imitations" there are none of the highly wrought "Characters" which light up the Moral Essays, "but there is the same power of touching contemporary events gracefully, the same nod of easy recognition for a passing friend, the same flush as an opponent crosses his path. These poems are like a felicitous quotation, which is often worth more than an independent *bon mot*, having all its own wit and wisdom, and all the association of the original passage besides." [1]

There are signs that the day of a wider popularity for Pope may dawn again. That his work, with all its limitations, is typical of English thought and English character, is proved by the fact that, next to Shakespeare, he has provided us with the largest number of those words and phrases which are the common coin of literature and conversation. Newman must surely have had Pope in his mind when he said :

"I do not claim for a great author as such any great depth of thought, or breadth of view, or knowledge of human nature, or experience of human life, though these additional gifts he may have—and the more he has of them the greater

[1] Conington.

he is—but I ascribe to him, as his characteristic gift, in a large sense, the faculty of expression. He expresses what all feel and cannot say, and his sayings pass into proverbs among his people, and his phrases become household words and idioms of their daily speech, which is tesselated with the rich fragments of his language, as we see in foreign lands the marbles of Roman grandeur worked into the walls and pavements of modern palaces."

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